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The Wesleyan Standards.

# SERMONS

BY THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.,

Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

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A NEW AND REVISED EDITION,  
WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTES,  
ANALYSES, AND QUESTIONS.

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*Adapted to the Use of Students.*

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BY REV. W. P. HARRISON, D.D.,

Book Editor, Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

Vol. I.

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## EDITOR'S PREFACE.

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No apology is needed for this edition of Mr. Wesley's Sermons. From the foundation of our Church, the Fifty-two Sermons, first published in four volumes, have been accepted as forming an important part of our doctrinal standards. The test of time, the lapse of one hundred years, reveals the wisdom of our fathers in accepting these helps to the formation of a pure scriptural creed. Without note or comment they have formed a part of our Course of Study for many years, and are now sent forth in these volumes with such additional aids as experience has rendered necessary.

Many of our young men have not received the methodical training which qualifies one to analyze and digest a body of doctrinal truth without the assistance of a teacher. Those who have received a regular course of theological tuition will not find the aids here presented without a certain value. The design is not to substitute the labor of the student by elaborate notes, but to suggest a method of study that will render the effort of the student in the highest degree successful.

I have followed, in the general arrangement, the plan of Professor Burwash, of Canada, in his edition of the Wesleyan Standards for the use of the Methodist Church in Canada. In the position of the Introductory Notes and the Analysis I have inverted the order, placing the Notes first, and the Analysis next in order, and immediately preceding the Sermon. The Notes are taken from various sources, but chiefly from the work of Professor Burwash. Wherever I have used his language, I have made acknowledgment in the text. The Analyses are his, with the exception of those prefixed to the six sermons XXI.-XXVI.

The Questions appended to the sermons I have added as a special feature, intended to facilitate the progress of the student by directing him to the most important points contained in the sermon. In most instances the question refers to the first general statement in the paragraph. It is not intended that these Questions should embrace all the points of importance in the sermon, but only such as may lead to an intelligent conception of the entire argument. To adapt the Questions to all the subjects worthy of notice would enlarge the volume, without accomplishing the object in view.

Commending these Sermons to every student of the Bible, and especially to those who are called to expound the gospel, I can only add a fervent wish that they may prove a blessing to all who study them diligently and practice the principles they inculcate.

W. P. HARRISON, *Book Editor.*

Nashville, December, 1886.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IN the preparation of this edition of the Wesleyan Standards, two objects have been kept steadily in view. First, the arrangement of the Introductory Notes, Analyses, and Questions in such a manner as to bring distinctly to view the system of Methodist theology. In the second place, to provide by this arrangement a complete series of helps for the use of the student, thereby forming a practical text-book for those who need to be directed in the method of studying the sermons. Among this class of students the first and most prominent are the young ministers in our traveling connection. Next to these, the local preachers, teachers of Bible classes, and all others who may desire to attain to proficiency in this department of Methodist theology.

In order to prepare the student for this work, it is necessary to notice, briefly—

### I. *The Nature and Proper Use of Doctrinal Standards.*

It is obvious to every one that the fundamental doctrines of the gospel ought to be clearly understood by those whose office it is to teach them. It is no less obvious that connected with these doctrines which may be called fundamental are many others which are necessary to a clear and logical system of theology. These latter we may not seek to impose upon all Christians, and yet they are indispensable to us. To leave the entire gospel to the whims and caprices of individual interpreters is to destroy all unity of sentiment, and to cause the trumpet to give an uncertain sound. Uniformity of teaching in all important branches of truth is essential to the harmonious development of the Christian life. The adoption of a series of standards drawn from the Holy Scriptures, and used as guides in the effort to compre

hend the will of God, is the only method by which practical uniformity can be obtained. Within these limits every principle that may be properly called Wesleyan should be confined, leaving a large and harmless liberty of opinion with regard to any view or interpretation of Scripture that does not involve the integrity of the Wesleyan system. Thus we attain a twofold purpose: we secure uniformity in essential doctrines, and give sufficient margin for individual liberty in the discovery and interpretation of divine truth. We believe that this was the design of Mr. Wesley himself, and in adopting this course we are not only pursuing a method that recommends itself to our judgment, but are carrying out the purpose and wishes of the man who, under Divine Providence, became the leader in a revival of practical religion which is even now extending its influence and becoming more and more a blessing to the world.

This uniformity of doctrinal belief has usually been obtained by the use of creeds. As the name (*credo*, I believe) implies, the earliest known form was simply a confession of faith, in which the principal articles of religion were comprised. Although we find no specimen of this kind in the New Testament, there is nothing in the fact itself that is necessarily in conflict with the Holy Scriptures. While there is in no inspired book a complete formula or symbol resembling modern articles of religion, it is evident that the absence of apostolical authority would naturally cause the early Christians to compile out of the Scriptures a system of doctrine which would serve a double purpose. It would present the substance of apostolic teaching in a brief and practical form, whereby the Christian religion could be readily taught. Its secondary purpose would be the prevention of discord and dissension by uniting under one bond all of those who should become the teachers of the people. That creeds and confessions of faith have been greatly abused, and have been made the occasion of oppression and cruelty, will not form an argument against their legitimate

and proper use. It is certainly true in doctrinal as in other matters pertaining to mankind, that two persons cannot walk together unless they agree. Co-operation in action implies union of sentiment.

There is, however, a marked difference between the doctrinal standards of Methodism and those of other Churches. Protestant Churches have adopted, almost without exception, confessions of faith, or articles of religion, as the sole standard of doctrinal teaching. These they regard as brief summaries of the gospel contained in the New Testament. Mr. Wesley departed from the custom of ages by giving to his followers not merely the outlines of a system of truth to be subscribed and believed, but the method and substance of doctrine in the form of sermons delivered from the pulpit. The wisdom of this method the experience of more than a century has demonstrated. The brief, and often ambiguous, forms of a creed may sometimes promote, instead of preventing, dissension and controversy. In such a concise statement the mere *letter* of the truth can be recorded. In the Wesleyan Standards we have the *spirit* of the truth also. The manner of presenting the great doctrines of the gospel, the arguments by which the truth of God may be most successfully defended, and the objections which the sinful nature of man presents in the form of excuse or extenuation for neglect or abuse of the divine mercy, are all set forth with felicity of diction and comprehensiveness of knowledge. The forms of error which Mr. Wesley attacks are not those which are peculiar to a country or an age. However they may change the distinctive expressions which apply to them in the eighteenth century, these errors are still in existence, and must be overthrown if the gospel is to meet the wants of the world and destroy the kingdom of Satan.

The facts here stated prepare us to consider—

## II. *The Wesleyan Standards of Doctrine.*

These are, the Twenty-five Articles of Religion—all of which, except the one relating to civil government, were

prepared by Mr. Wesley for the Methodists in America—the Fifty-two Sermons contained in the two volumes here presented, and the Notes on the New Testament. Of the Articles of Religion this is not the place to speak. The Sermons, as before stated, are, in a sense, complementary to the Articles, and the Notes were intended to assist the student in the examination of the New Testament, wherein, it is believed, the doctrines of the Sermons are explicitly taught.

The doctrines contained in the Fifty-two Sermons are thus stated by Professor Burwash:

“1. The universality and impartiality of God’s grace to man as manifested in the provisions of the atonement.

“2. The freedom of the human will, and man’s individual, probational responsibility to God.

“3. The absolute necessity, in religion, of holiness in heart and life.

“4. The natural impossibility of this to fallen human nature.

“5. The perfect provision for this necessity and impossibility, as well as for the pardon of past sins, in the salvation offered by Christ.

“6. The sole condition of this salvation—faith.

“7. The conscious witness of the Spirit to this salvation.

“This full-orbed conception of scriptural religion,” says Professor Burwash, “embraced the great scriptural verities of all ages and schools of Christian thought. It grasped the wideness of God’s love with the old Greek Christian and the modern Arminian, and it sounded the depths of the human heart with Augustine. It maintained the necessity of good works with the Roman Church, and it recognized the peculiar import of faith with Protestantism. With the Churchman it held the importance of means, and with the evangelical mystic it recognized the peculiar office of inward grace; and it built the doctrines of inward holiness and

Christian perfection of the English mystics upon their true foundation by uniting them to the evangelical principle of saving faith."

This system of doctrine commends itself to our judgment in many ways. It is found to be in perfect accord with the whole tenor of the Bible. There are doctrinal beliefs that have been founded upon a single text of Scripture. These single-text doctrines are frequently in absolute conflict with many other portions of Scripture, and the apology which is offered for accepting the one against the many sometimes ends in a confession that *both* classes of doctrines are *true*. However great the antagonism may be, it is claimed that it is not the duty of man to *reconcile* these opposing doctrines, but to *believe* them. There are great names in the Christian world that are identified with this questionable method of dealing with the Holy Scriptures.

Mr. Wesley, however, maintained that the Bible was consistent with itself, and a book that appealed to the reason as well as to the faith of mankind must be so interpreted as to bring all its doctrinal statements into harmony with each other. If an occasional expression, taken by itself, seemed to antagonize other and plainer passages, the presumption is that the single text has been misinterpreted. In the light of this method we are not required to labor for an exhaustive exegesis of any class of scriptural statements. The unity of purpose and the unity of doctrine go hand in hand, presenting a sure basis of belief, and preserving the character of God in all the beauty of his holiness and truth.

This system commends itself to our judgment further, in that it records the personal experience of one who was a remarkable instrument in the hand of Providence. The historical character of Mr. Wesley's teaching is so distinctive that it may properly be called *unique*. There is nothing like it in the history of Christian doctrine. It was the outcome of a personal desire to find the pearl of great price. The

subject of this intense longing for the bread of life was qualified in the most remarkable manner for the task. He was a man of learning even in his youth. With the sacred Scriptures in their original tongues he was thoroughly acquainted, even in a scholastic point of view, and was excelled in this department of criticism by few, if any, in his time. He was by early training and by the direction of his personal ambition peculiarly qualified to search after truth. His teachableness, his patience, his humility, the vigor of his understanding, and his tireless energy, united to candor and simplicity of mind and heart, present a combination of qualities which can be found only among those who have been selected by Divine Providence to lead men into the noblest and grandest fields of human endeavor.

The length of time employed in this personal development of doctrinal truth exceeded fifty years. From the earliest to the latest hour of his life some of these doctrines were maintained. Others, developed in and attested by his own experience in 1738, he patiently reviewed and narrowly examined fifty years afterward, and confidently proclaimed his conviction of their scriptural soundness. Thus we have from the historical point of view a system of religious truth fearlessly maintained in the face of every species of opposition, from the contemptuous indifference of the Pharisee or the infidel, to the cruel and brutal persecution of the infuriated zealot or the half-heathen mob.

One of the principal features of these Sermons is their *controversial* character. In this respect they are worthy of admiration on several grounds. Mr. Wesley recognized the truth, sufficiently obvious, and yet by many writers of his time overlooked, that the office of logic is simply to provide the clearest and most satisfactory method of reasoning. Therefore he wrote plainly, because he wrote for plain people; and he employed the simplest methods of speech, because these were best calculated to convince the understanding. To persuade men to accept and to practice "the truth

as it is in Jesus" was his only purpose. To triumph over his adversaries was an object far beneath his ambition; to convince them of error, and to induce them to embrace the truth, was a purpose of transcendent importance. He discusses no subject that is not directly related to the spiritual well-being of his hearers. With him theory is nothing unless it leads to correct practice. We find, therefore, in these Sermons only those subjects that belong to the development of personal religion, the reign of Christ in the soul. Upon these themes he argues with such clearness that it is impossible not to understand his meaning, and with such logical precision that we cannot resist the force of his conclusions.

"Methodism from the beginning," says Prof. Burwash, "had been a living protest against the cold externalism and formalism which had well-nigh extinguished all genuine religion in England in the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was likewise in uncompromising antagonism with all those doctrines of legalism, sacramentarianism, and Churchism which ally themselves so naturally to formality. The Wesleys themselves, while free from the frivolities of modern ritualism, and while strenuously opposed to the easy-going legality of latitudinarianism, were still prejudiced High-churchmen and Sacramentarians in the beginning of their career. But by the time of the origin of our standards the evangelical leaven had eliminated almost every vestige of these antagonistic principles. But the evangelical doctrine was not without its peculiar dangers. The doctrine of faith, by what appeared to be a very slight modification, but which was in reality a total perversion of its principles, was easily imitated by an Antinomian theory of salvation by logical deduction. A commercial view of the atonement, a disregard of the profound work of the Spirit and of the necessity of repentance, and a resting in an intellectual assurance instead of the God-given witness of the Spirit—these were the elements out of which were constructed an imitation of evangelical religion which, even in Mr. Wesley's day, threatened to pervert the great work

of grace which God had wrought through his preaching. The four volumes of Sermons appeared in their final form just at the juncture when the conflict with Antinomianism culminated in the Calvinistic controversy. But a quarter of a century before this the Doctrinal Minutes had guarded the preachers against Antinomian error; so that, as during that time these sermons had grown into form, they embodied the opposition of the true Christian life to all varieties of teaching which might favor this spurious imitation.

“There were other minor forms of error, such as the Moravian stillness and certain enthusiastic extravagances, which have left their impress on the form of the Sermons; but in their opposition to all these things the Sermons did not cease to be sermons. They maintained their *practical* and *spiritual* character, and aimed only and directly at the extension and perfection of the religious life.

“Another cause which prevented this controversial aspect of the Sermons from marring their perfection as standards of doctrine for all time was the fact that the essential principles of these controversies belong to all time. They are as old as the days of Paul, and have repeated themselves in every subsequent age of the Church’s history. It was, therefore, imperatively necessary that standards of doctrine should give no uncertain sound in regard to the questions herein involved.

“Finally, in the study of these documents, it must be borne in mind that they were proposed as standards of *preaching*. That which was to be tested by them was *the pulpit in every Methodist Church*. This was to be *the type of preaching for which these houses were erected*. The relation in which Methodism stood to the Established Church in England during Mr. Wesley’s life provided for the doctrinal unity of Methodism with the Protestant Reformation. When, in the United States of America, Methodism became an independent Church, the same provision was made by the abridged and amended Articles of Religion. But the introduction of the Sermons and Notes as the standard of

preaching into every trust-deed of a chapel or church in the Connection assured, as far as human means can do so, an Arminian evangelical preaching and exposition of God's Word for all time.

"To interpret these standards or apply them after the manner of Articles of Religion, or Creeds, or Confessions of Faith, which categorically define the doctrines to be professed or believed, would be contrary to their very nature. *It is to the spirit and type of this preaching that our obligations bind us.* There may be in the Notes and Sermons many things, accidental and personal, to which no Methodist minister or layman would feel bound to profess assent. But Methodism demands that in our pulpits we should preach *this gospel* and expound the Word of God according to *this analogy of faith.*"

The student should keep in mind the important truth that there is no new principle in Christian theology. While the modes of interpretation, the terms by which the Word of God is explained and illustrated, will in different ages vary according to the degree of enlightenment and the environment of the ministry and the laymen of the Church, yet truth is always *old*. We can discover nothing that the apostles did not know concerning the will of God and the revelation of God to men. Our *progress*, then, while it may be forward, in advance, when comparing our own with the ages that have passed away since the death of inspired men, is only toward a perfect interpretation of what these inspired men have given us in the Bible.

Viewed in this light, there can be no surrender of our liberty of thought by adopting a system of truth based upon the Scriptures, which we must explain and enforce as we may have divine assistance. It is not necessary to employ the words recorded in these discourses. It is the *spirit* of truth which is commended to us. This we must preserve, and hand down to others who shall follow us as we have followed Christ, whose will and words have been interpreted and applied by the man whose parish was the world.

In this volume there are twenty-six sermons, divided as follows:

1. Sermons I.-IV. were preached before the University of Oxford. They contain the fundamental evangelical doctrine of "salvation by faith" in contrast with the imperfect Christianity of outward works and the indifference of worldly minds as a work of the Holy Ghost.

2. Eight sermons (V.-XII.), being the substance of Mr. Wesley's evangelical preaching during the earlier period of his ministry. (Sermon XI. was added in the year 1767.) The gospel salvation is expounded as justification or righteousness by faith, with its antecedent conditions, repentance and faith; its results, the fruits of the Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, and the twofold witness of the Spirit of God with our own spirit.

3. Two sermons (XIII. and XIV.), inserted in 1771, guarding the evangelical doctrines against the perfectionism of the Moravians, and encouraging weak Christians.

4. Sermon XV., a special sermon on the Judgment, preached in 1758, and inserted in 1771.

5. Sermon XVI., guarding the evangelical doctrines against the "stillness" of the Moravians.

6. Sermons XVII.-XX., guarding the evangelical doctrines against Antinomianism. The last of these was added in 1771.

7. Sermons XXI.-XXVI., on our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, complete the volume.

## PREFACE.

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THE following Sermons contain the substance of what I have been preaching for between eight and nine years last past.\* During that time I have frequently spoken in public, on every subject in the ensuing collection: and I am not conscious, that there is any one point of doctrine, on which I am accustomed to speak in public, which is not here, incidentally, if not professedly, laid before every Christian reader. Every serious man, who peruses these, will therefore see in the clearest manner, what these doctrines are, which I embrace and teach, as the essentials of true religion.

2 But I am thoroughly sensible, these are not proposed in such a manner as some may expect. Nothing here appears in an elaborate, elegant, or oratorical dress. If it had been my desire or design to write thus, my leisure would not permit. But, in truth, I, at present, designed nothing less; for I now write, as I generally speak, *ad populum*: to the bulk of mankind, to those who neither relish nor understand the art of speaking; but who, notwithstanding, are competent judges of those truths, which are necessary to present and future

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\* In the year 1747.

happiness. I mention this, that curious readers may spare themselves the labour of seeking for what they will not find.

3. I design plain truth for plain people : therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations ; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings ; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scripture. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood, all which are not used in common life ; and, in particular, those kinds of technical terms that so frequently occur in bodies of divinity,—those modes of speaking, which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which, to common people, are an unknown tongue. Yet I am not assured, that I do not sometimes slide into them unawares : it is so extremely natural to imagine, that a word which is familiar to ourselves is so to all the world.

4. Nay, my design is, in some sense, to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to speak, in the general, as if I had never read one author, ancient or modern (always excepting the inspired) : I am persuaded that, on the one hand, this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to express the sentiments of my heart, while I simply follow the chain of my own thoughts, without entangling myself with those of other men ; and that, on the other, I shall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with less of prejudice and prepossession either to search for myself, or to deliver to others the naked truths of the gospel.

5. To candid, reasonable men, I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart

I have thought, I am a creature of a day, passing through life, as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God : just hovering over the great gulf ; till a few moments hence, I am no more seen ! I drop into an unchangeable eternity ! I want to know one thing, the way to heaven : how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way ; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book ! Oh, give me that book ! At any price, give me the book of God ! I have it : here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*.\* Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone : only God is here. In his presence I open, I read this book ; for this end, to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read ? Does any thing appear dark or intricate ? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not thy word, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God ?" Thou "givest liberally and upbraidest not." Thou hast said, "If any be willing to do thy will, he shall know." I am willing to do ; let me know thy will. I then search after, and consider parallel passages of Scripture, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual." I meditate thereon, with all the attention and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God ; and then, the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn, that I teach.

6. I have accordingly set down in the following ser-

mons, what I find in the Bible concerning the way to heaven ; with a view to distinguish this way of God, from all those which are the inventions of men. I have endeavoured to describe the true, the scriptural, experimental religion, so as to omit nothing which is a real part thereof, and to add nothing thereto which is not. And herein it is more especially my desire, first to guard those who are just setting their faces towards heaven (and who, having little acquaintance with the things of God, are the more liable to be turned out of the way,) from formality, from mere outside religion, which has almost driven heart religion out of the world ; and, secondly, to warn those who know the religion of the heart, the faith which worketh by love, lest at any time they make void the law through faith, and so fall back into the snare of the devil.

7. By the advice, and at the request of some of my friends, I have prefixed to the other sermons contained in this volume, three sermons of my own, and one of my brother's, preached before the university of Oxford. My design required some discourses on those heads. And I preferred these before any others, as being a stronger answer than any which can be drawn up now, to those who have frequently asserted, that we have changed our doctrine of late, and do not preach now, what we did some years ago. Any man of understanding may now judge for himself, when he has compared the latter with the former sermons.

8. But some may say, I have mistaken the way myself, although I take upon me to teach it to others. It is probable many will think this, and it is very possible that I have. But I trust, whereinsoever I have mis-

taken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, "What I know not, teach thou me?"

9. Are you persuaded you see more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Show me it is so, by plain proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and am therefore unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little; take me by the hand, and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not displeased if I entreat you not to beat me down in order to quicken my pace: I can go but feebly and slowly at best; then, I should not be able to go at all. May I not request of you, farther, not to give me hard names in order to bring me into the right way. Suppose I were ever so much in the wrong, I doubt not this would not set me right. Rather, it would make me run so much the farther from you, and so get more and more out of the way.

10. Nay, perhaps, if you are angry, so shall I be too; and then there will be small hopes of finding the truth. If once anger arise, *ηντε καπνος*, (as Homer somewhere expresses it,) this smoke will so dim the eyes of my soul, that I shall be able to see nothing clearly. For God's sake, if it be possible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much less blow it up into a flame. If we could discern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loss, rather than gain? For, now far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love! We may

die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels!

The God of love forbid we should ever make the trial! May he prepare us for the knowledge of all truth, by filling our hearts with all his love, and with all joy and peace in believing!

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## SERMON I. INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THIS sermon was preached by Mr. Wesley before the University of Oxford, June 11, 1738, eighteen days after the conscious experience of the new life. It consists of three parts—the definition of faith, the definition of salvation, and the answer to objections.

For many years Mr. Wesley had been seeking for salvation by the works of the law. Going about to establish his own righteousness by prayer, fasting, and in doing good works, he found not the pearl of great price. At last he was convinced by Peter Boehler, the Moravian, that salvation comes by faith—and that it comes whenever the soul puts its trust in Christ the Saviour. As this sermon was the immediate result of his own conversion, it is proper to give his experience in his own words:

“Accordingly, the next day he [Peter Boehler] came again with three others, all of whom testified of their own personal experience that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past and freedom from all present sins. They added with one mouth that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God; and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and by the grace of God I resolved to seek it unto the end: 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon *my own* works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the constant use of all the other means of

grace continual prayer for the very thing, justifying saving grace, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for *me*; a trust in him as *my* Christ, as *my* sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

"I continued thus to seek it (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24th. I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on these words, Τα μεγαιστα ημιν και τιμα επαγγελματα δεδωρηται, να γενησθε θειας κοινωνοι φυσεως: 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the Divine nature,' 2 Peter i. 4. Just as I went out I opened it again on these words: 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was: 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with thee; therefore, thou shalt be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

Thus was Mr. Wesley led step by step, until he realized the great blessing of conscious pardon. The Holy Spirit sealed the truth to his heart, and under the gracious influence he gave himself wholly to the Lord by an act of trust in the Saviour of men. Then he was able to say: "His blood was shed for *me*; he is *my* Saviour." As he defines this

faith in the following sermon, so he describes the salvation which attends it. This knowledge of salvation from sin is illustrated by his own experience:

"After my return home I was much buffeted with temptations, but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He 'sent me help from his holy place.' And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might, under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror."

Five days later he writes: "I have constant peace, not one uneasy thought; and I have *freedom from sin*, not one unholy desire." Two days after this he adds: "Yet on Wednesday did I grieve the Spirit of God, not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness, instead of tender love, of one that was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid his face, and I was troubled; and in this heaviness I continued till the next morning, June 1, when it pleased God, while I was exhorting another, to give comfort to my soul."

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON I.

Grace is the source of all blessings to man, and in his fallen condition must be preëminently the source of his salvation. Faith is its condition.

I. What faith is it through which we are saved?

1. Not barely the faith of a heathen in God as moral governor.
2. Not the intellectual faith of a devil.
3. Not barely the faith of the apostles before the resurrection.
4. But a faith in Christ, of the heart, in the atonement.
5. Hence Christian faith is not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency on him as our atonement and our life, as

*given for us, and living in us.* It is a sure confidence which a man hath in God, that through the merits of Christ *his* sins are forgiven and *he* reconciled to the favor of God; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and a cleaving to him as our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," or, in one word, our salvation.

II. What is the salvation which is through faith?

1. A present salvation.
2. From sin.
3. From guilt.
4. From fear.
5. From the power of sin. He that is born of God sinneth not by habitual sin, nor by willful sin, nor by sinful desire, nor by infirmities.

III. Answer to objections.

1. Salvation by faith is not opposed to good works, for—
2. It does not reduce God's law to the limits of human weakness, but points out its true spiritual fulfillment.
3. It does not lead to pride, for it excludes boasting.
4. It does not encourage in sin, since God's goodness will lead all the sincere to repentance.
5. It drives to despair only of ourselves, that we may find salvation in Christ.
6. It is the doctrine of true comfort.
7. It is the scriptural foundation doctrine.
8. It is the effectual antidote to Romanism.
9. And the true secret of the power of Protestantism.

## SERMON I.

### SALVATION BY FAITH.

PREDICATED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY  
JUNE 11, 1788.

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*"By grace are ye saved through faith."*—EPH. ii. 8.

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1. ALL the blessings which God hath bestowed upon man are of his mere grace, bounty, or favour; his free, undeserved favour; favour altogether undeserved; man having no claim to the least of his mercies. It was free grace that "formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into him a living soul," and stamped on that soul the image of God, and "put all things under his feet." The same free grace continues to us, at this day, life and breath and all things. For there is nothing we are, or have, or do, which can deserve the least thing at God's hand. "All our works, thou, O God, hast wrought in us." These, therefore, are so many more instances of free mercy; and whatever righteousness may be found in man, this is also the gift of God.

2. Wherewithal then shall a sinful man atone for any the least of his sins? With his own works? No. Were they ever so many or holy, they are not his own, but God's. But indeed they are all unholly and sinful themselves, so that every one of them needs a fresh atonement. Only corrupt fruit grows on a corrupt tree. And his heart is altogether corrupt and abominable; being "come short of the glory of God," the glorious righteousness at first impressed on his soul after the image of his great Creator. Therefore, having nothing, neither righteousness nor works, to plead, his mouth is utterly stopped before God.

3. If then sinful men find favour with God, it is "grace upon grace!" If God vouchsafe still to pow

fresh blessings upon us, yea, the greatest of all blessings, salvation; what can we say to these things, but "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" And thus it is. Herein "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died" to save us. "By grace" then "are ye saved through faith." Grace is the source, faith the condition of salvation.

Now, that we fall not short of the grace of God, it concerns us carefully to inquire,

I. What faith it is through which we are saved.

II. What is the salvation which is through faith.

III. How we may answer some objections.

I. What faith it is through which we are saved.

1. And, first, it is not barely the faith of a heathen.

Now God requireth of a heathen to believe "that God is; that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and that he is to be sought by glorifying him as God, by giving him thanks for all things, and by a careful practice of moral virtue, of justice, mercy, and truth, toward their fellow-creatures. A Greek or Roman, therefore, yea, a Scythian or Indian, was without excuse if he did not believe thus much: the being and attributes of God, a future state of reward and punishment, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. For this is barely the faith of a heathen.

2. Nor, secondly, is it the faith of a devil; though this goes much farther than that of a heathen. For the devil believes not only that there is a wise and powerful God, gracious to reward, and just to punish; but also, that Jesus is the Son of God, the Christ, the Saviour of the world. So we find him declaring, in express terms, "I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." (Luke iv. 34.) Nor can we doubt but that unhappy spirit believes all those words which came out of the mouth of the Holy One; yea, and whatsoever else was written by those holy men of old, of two of whom he was compelled to give that glorious testimony, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto you the way of salvation." Thus much, then, the great enemy of God and man believes,

and trembles in believing,—that God was made manifest in the flesh; that he will “tread all enemies under his feet;” and that “all Scripture was given by inspiration of God.” Thus far goeth the faith of a devil.

3 Thirdly. The faith through which we are saved, in that sense of the word which will hereafter be explained, is not barely that which the apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon earth; though they so believed on him as to “leave all and follow him;” although they had then power to work miracles, to “heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease;” yea, they had then “power and authority over all devils;” and, which is beyond all this, were sent by their Master to “preach the kingdom of God.”

4. What faith is it, then, through which we are saved? It may be answered, first, in general, it is a faith in Christ: Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of it. Herein, therefore, it is sufficiently, absolutely distinguished from the faith either of ancient or modern heathens. And from the faith of a devil it is fully distinguished by this: it is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart. For thus saith the Scripture, “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness;” and, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

5. And herein does it differ from that faith which the apostles themselves had while our Lord was on earth, that it acknowledges the necessity and merit of his death, and the power of his resurrection. It acknowledges his death as the only sufficient means of redeeming man from death eternal, and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality; inasmuch as he “was delivered for our sins, and rose again for our justification.” Christian faith is, then, not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ; a trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, *as given for us, and living in us; and*

in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," or, in one word, our salvation.

II. What salvation it is which is through this faith, is the second thing to be considered.

1. And, first, whatsoever else it imply, it is a present salvation. It is something attainable, yea, actually attained on earth, by those who are partakers of this faith. For thus saith the apostle to the believers at Ephesus, and in them to the believers of all ages, not, *Ye shall be* (though that also is true,) but, *Ye are saved* through faith."

2. *Ye are saved* (to comprise all in one word) from sin. This is the salvation which is through faith. This is that great salvation foretold by the angel, before God brought his First-begotten into the world: "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins." And neither here, nor in other parts of holy writ, is there any limitation or restriction. All his people, or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "all that believe in him," he will save from all their sins; from original and actual, past and present sin, "of the flesh and of the spirit." Through faith that is in him, they are saved both from the guilt and from the power of it.

3. First, from the guilt of all past sin; for, whereas all the world is guilty before God, insomuch that should he "be extreme to mark what is done amiss, there is none that could abide it;" and whereas, "by the law is" only "the knowledge of sin," but no deliverance from it, so that, "by" fulfilling "the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight;" now, "the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is manifested unto all that believe." Now, "they are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." "Him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for (or by) the remission of the sins that are past." Now hath Christ taken away "the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." He hath "blotted out the handwriting that was against us, taking it out of the

way, nailing it to his cross." "There is therefore no condemnation now to them which" believe "in Christ Jesus."

4. And being saved from guilt, they are saved from fear. Not indeed from a filial fear of offending; but from all servile fear; from that fear which hath torment; from fear of punishment; from fear of the wrath of God, whom they now no longer regard as a severe Master, but as an indulgent Father. "They have not received again the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father: the Spirit itself also bearing witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God." They are also saved from the fear, though not from the possibility, of falling away from the grace of God, and coming short of the great and precious promises. Thus have they "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." They rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, through the Holy Ghost, which is given unto them. And hereby they are persuaded, (though perhaps not at all times, nor with the same fulness of persuasion,) that "neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

5. Again: through this faith they are saved from the power of sin, as well as from the guilt of it. So the apostle declares, "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not" (1 John iii. 5, &c.) Again: "Little children, let no man deceive you. He that committeth sin is of the devil. Whosoever believeth is born of God. And whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." Once more. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John v. 18.)

6. He that is, by faith, born of God sinneth not (1.) By any habitual sin; for all habitual sin is sin reigning: but sin cannot reign in any that believeth

Nor, (2.) By any wilful sin; for his will, while he abideth in the faith, is utterly set against all sin, and abhorreth it as deadly poison. Nor, (3.) By any sinful desire: for he continually desireth the holy and perfect will of God; and any tendency to an unholy desire, he by the grace of God stifeth in the birth. Nor, (4.) Doth he sin by infirmities, whether in act, word, or thought; for his infirmities have no concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins. Thus, "he that is born of God doth not commit sin;" and though he cannot say, he hath not sinned, yet now "he sinneth not."

7. This then is the salvation which is through faith even in the present world: a salvation from sin, and the consequences of sin, both often expressed in the word *justification*; which, taken in the largest sense, implies a deliverance from guilt and punishment, by the atonement of Christ actually applied to the soul of the sinner now believing on him, and a deliverance from the power of sin, through Christ *formed in his heart*. So that he who is thus justified, or saved by faith, is indeed *born again*. He is *born again of the Spirit* unto a new life, which "is hid with Christ in God." And as a new-born babe he gladly receives the *αδολον*, "sincere milk of the word, and grows thereby;" going on in the might of the Lord his God, from faith to faith, from grace to grace, until, at length, he come unto "a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

III. The first usual objection to this is,

1. That to preach salvation, or justification, by faith only, is to preach against holiness and good works. To which a short answer might be given: "It would be so, if we spake, as some do, of a faith which was separate from these; but we speak of a faith which is not so, but productive of all good works, and all holiness."

2. But it may be of use to consider it more at large; especially since it is no new objection, but as old as St. Paul's time: for even then it was asked, "Do we not make void the law through faith?" We answer.

first, All who preach not faith do manifestly make void the law; either directly and grossly, by limitations and comments that eat out all the spirit of the text; or, indirectly, by not pointing out the only means whereby it is possible to perform it. Whereas, secondly, "we establish the law," both by showing its full extent and spiritual meaning; and by calling all to that living way, whereby "the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in them." These, while they trust in the blood of Christ alone, use all the ordinances which he hath appointed, do all the "good works which he had before prepared that they should walk therein," and enjoy and manifest all holy and heavenly tempers, even the same mind that was in Christ Jesus.

3. But does not preaching this faith lead men into pride? We answer, Accidentally it may: therefore ought every believer to be earnestly cautioned, in the words of the great apostle, "Because of unbelief," the first branches "were broken off; and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear. If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God! On them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." And while he continues therein, he will remember those words of St. Paul, foreseeing and answering this very objection, (Rom. iii. 27,) "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." If a man were justified by his works, he would have whereof to glory. But there is no glorying for him "that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." (Rom. iv. 5.) To the same effect are the words both preceding and following the text: (Eph. ii. 4, &c. :) "God, who is rich in mercy, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) that he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves."

Of yourselves cometh neither your faith nor your salvation: "it is the gift of God;" the free, undeserved gift; the faith through which ye are saved, as well as the salvation which he of his own good pleasure, his mere favour, annexes thereto. That ye believe, is one instance of his grace: that believing ye are saved, answer "Not of works, lest any man should boast." For all our works, all our righteousness, which were before our believing, merited nothing of God but condemnation; so far were they from deserving faith, which therefore, whenever given, is not of works. Neither is salvation of the works we do when we believe; for it is then God that worketh in us: and therefore, that he giveth us a reward for what he himself worketh, only commendeth the riches of his mercy, but leaveth us nothing whereof to glory.

4. However, may not the speaking thus of the mercy of God, as saving or justifying freely by faith only, encourage men in sin? Indeed it may and will: many will "continue in sin that grace may abound;" but their blood is upon their own head. The goodness of God ought to lead them to repentance; and so it will those who are sincere of heart. When they know there is yet forgiveness with him, they will cry aloud that he would blot out their sins also through faith which is in Jesus. And if they earnestly cry, and faint not; if they seek him in all the means he hath appointed; if they refuse to be comforted till he come; "he will come, and will not tarry." And he can do much work in a short time. Many are the examples, in the Acts of the Apostles, of God's working this faith in men's hearts, even like lightning falling from heaven. So in the same hour that Paul and Silas began to preach, the jailer repented, believed and was baptized; as were three thousand by St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, who all repented and believed at his first preaching. And, blessed be God, there are now many living proofs that he is still "mighty to save."

5. Yet to the same truth, placed in another view, a quite contrary objection is made: "If a man cannot be

saved by all that he can do, this will drive men to despair." True, to despair of being saved by their own works, their own merits, or righteousness. And so it ought; for none can trust in the merits of Christ, till he has utterly renounced his own. He that "goeth about to establish his own righteousness" cannot receive the righteousness of God. The righteousness which is of faith cannot be given him while he trusteth in that which is of the law.

6. But this, it is said, is an uncomfortable doctrine. The devil spoke like himself, that is, without either truth or shame, when he dared to suggest to men that it is such. It is the only comfortable one, it is "very full of comfort," to all self-destroyed, self-condemned sinners. That "whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed: that the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him;" here is comfort, high as heaven, stronger than death! What? Mercy for all? For Zaccheus, a public robber? For Mary Magdalene, a common harlot? Methinks I hear one say, "Then I, even I, may hope for mercy!" And so thou mayest, thou afflicted one, whom none hath comforted! God will not cast out thy prayer. Nay, perhaps he may say the next hour, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" so forgiven, that they shall reign over thee no more; yea, and that "the Holy Spirit shall bear witness with thy spirit that thou art a child of God." O glad tidings! tidings of great joy, which are sent unto all people! "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters: come ye, and buy, without money and without price." Whatsoever your sins be, "though red like crimson," though more than the hairs of your head, "return ye unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon you; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

7. When no more objections occur, then we are simply told, that salvation by faith only, ought not to be preached as the first doctrine, or, at least, not to be preached to all. But what saith the Holy Ghost? "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." So then, that "who-

soever believeth on him shall be saved," is, and must be, the foundation of all our preaching; that is. must be preached first. "Well, but not to all." To whom then are we not to preach it? Whom shall we except? The poor? Nay; they have a peculiar right to have the gospel preached unto them. The unlearned? No. God hath revealed these things unto unlearned and ignorant men from the beginning. The young? By no means. "Suffer these," in anywise, to come unto Christ, "and forbid them not." The sinners? Least of all. "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Why then, if any, we are to except the rich, the learned, the reputable, the moral men. And, it is true, they too often except themselves from hearing; yet we must speak the words of our Lord. For thus the tenor of our commission runs, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature." If any man wrest it, or any part of it, to his destruction, he must bear his own burden. But still, "as the Lord liveth; whatsoever the Lord saith unto us, that we will speak."

8. At this time, more especially, will we speak, that "by grace are ye saved through faith:" because, never was the maintaining this doctrine more seasonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increase of the Romish delusion among us. It is endless to attack, one by one, all the errors of that church. But salvation by faith strikes at the root, and all fall at once where this is established. It was this doctrine, which our church justly calls *the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion*, that first drove Popery out of these kingdoms; and it is this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality which hath "overspread the land as a flood." Can you empty the great deep, drop by drop? Then you may reform us by dissuasives from particular vices. But let the "righteousness which is of God by faith" be brought in, and so shall its proud waves be stayed. Nothing but this can stop the mouths of those who "glory in their shame, and openly deny the Lord that bought them." They can talk as sublimely of the law,

as he that hath it written by God in his heart. To hear them speak on this head might incline one to think they were not far from the kingdom of God : but take them out of the law into the gospel ; begin with the righteousness of faith ; with Christ, " the end of the law to every one that believeth ;" and those who but now appeared almost, if not altogether, Christians, stand confessed the sons of perdition ; as far from life and salvation (God be merciful unto them !) as the depth of hell from the height of heaven.

9. For this reason the adversary so rages whenever " salvation by faith" is declared to the world : for this reason did he stir up earth and hell, to destroy those who first preached it. And for the same reason, knowing that faith alone could overturn the foundations of his kingdom, did he call forth all his forces, and employ all his arts of lies and calumny, to affright Martin Luther from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat ; for, as that man of God observes, " how would it enrage a proud strong man armed to be stopped and set at nought by a little child coming against him with a reed in his hand !" especially when he knew that little child would surely overthrow him, and tread him under foot. Even so, Lord Jesus. Thus hath thy strength been ever " made perfect in weakness !" Go forth then, thou little child that believest in him, and his " right hand shall teach thee terrible things !" Though thou art helpless and weak as an infant of days, the strong man shall not be able to stand before thee. Thou shalt prevail over him, and subdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy feet. Thou shalt march on, under the great Captain of thy salvation, " conquering and to conquer," until all thine enemies are destroyed, and " death is swallowed up in victory."

Now, " thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ;" to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, for ever and ever. Amen.

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON. I.

- Ques. 1. (¶ 1). How are the blessings of God bestowed?
- Ques. 2. (¶ 1). Has man any claim upon the Divine favor?
- Ques. 3. (¶ 2). Can man atone for any of his sins?
- Ques. 4. (¶ 2). What is said of the corrupt tree?
- Ques. 5. (¶ 3). How can man find favor with God?
- Ques. 6. (I. 1). What does God require of a heathen?
- Ques. 7. (I. 1). What then is the faith of a heathen?
- Ques. 8. (I. 2). What is the faith of a devil?
- Ques. 9. (I. 3). What was the faith of the apostles before the crucifixion?
- Ques. 10. (I. 4). What is the faith through which we are saved?
- Ques. 11. (I. 4). How does it differ from the faith of a heathen? of a devil?
- Ques. 12. (I. 5). How does this faith differ from that which the apostles had while our Lord was on earth?
- Ques. 13. (I. 5). How is Christian faith defined?
- Ques. 14. (II. 1). What is the salvation which comes through faith?
- Ques. 15. (II. 2). What salvation was foretold by the angel?
- Ques. 16. (II. 3). How is this salvation first manifested?
- Ques. 17. (II. 4). What follows salvation from guilt?
- Ques. 18. (II. 5). Are we saved from the power of sin also?
- Ques. 19. (II. 6). How is this salvation defined? What is said of habitual sin? of willful sin? of sinful desires? of infirmities?
- Ques. 20. (II. 7). What is this salvation otherwise called?

Ques. 21. (III. 1). What is the first objection to this doctrine?

Ques. 22. (III. 2). Is this salvation opposed to holiness?

Ques. 23. (III. 3). Does it tend to produce pride? Ought it to do so?

Ques. 24. (III. 4). Does it encourage men in sin?

Ques. 25. (III. 5). Does it drive men into despair?

Ques. 26. (III. 6). Is it an uncomfortable doctrine?

Ques. 27. (III. 7). What is said when no more objections are offered?

Ques. 28. (III. 8). What is said of the Romish delusion? How has Mr. Wesley's view been verified? *Ans.* By the rise and prevalence of the Tractarian Controversy in Oxford, resulting in the secession of many persons to the Church of Rome some fifty years ago.

Ques. 29. (III. 9). How does the adversary oppose this doctrine?

SERMON II.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THIS sermon was preached in London about a month before it was delivered in Oxford. The type of character described is not confined to times or places. Doubtless the early Oxford Methodists presented the very best phase of the "Almost Christian" life. Sincerity, zeal, scrupulous attendance upon ordinances, unwearied diligence in the discharge of every duty, had combined to form the character which was named "Methodist" in derision. Notwithstanding all this, the preacher in this sermon declares that all these qualities belonged only to the "Almost Christian." Without the soul of true godliness this form of piety was destitute of power. That he did not overlook the elements of genuine religion to be found in the character here presented is evident from Mr. Wesley's ninth sermon, where this same legality is contrasted with natural enmity and indifference. Nothing could mark more decidedly his sense of the supreme importance of the crisis known as conversion, than the fact that he here makes all antecedent grace avail nothing without that crowning experience which transforms the almost into the altogether Christian.

His appeal to his hearers, in recalling his own experience among them, is characteristic of the preacher. He shows himself to be utterly destitute of that pride of opinion, that false consistency, that causes a man to adhere to wrong, simply because he has once committed himself to it. He can speak of himself as if it were another man, and use his own example to caution his hearers against error. There are phases of self-condemnation very different from this. Some recently converted men have emphasized their wicked career, and in some instances magnified it, in order to

make the contrast with their present state stronger and more striking. This is a dangerous if not a censurable practice. The glaring sins of this life, if they need be mentioned at all by a converted man, should be alluded to with profound sorrow and a feeling of self-abasement very far from any species of boasting. To do otherwise is to run the risk of creating an impression very far removed from that which is designed. The hearer may not feel a sentiment of gratitude for the rescue of a great sinner, but a doubt as to the genuineness of the purpose and the reality of the change.

In Mr. Wesley's case, the allusions to his own experience are pertinent, and are made in a spirit of true humility, whereas the matter with which he charges himself was an effort to serve God in a manner that excelled the highest professions of many who listened to his discourse. This contrast is striking. If his zeal and conscientiousness fell short of the mark, what must have been the condemnation of those who cared for none of those things that constitute a true Christian life?

This sermon presents us with the outlines of the "General Rules of the United Societies," which were published early in 1743, nearly two years after the delivery of this discourse.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON II.

##### I. What is implied in being almost a Christian?

1. Heathen honesty, including justice, truth, and love.
2. The form of godliness; in abstaining from outward sins, doing good even to labor and suffering, and using the means of grace publicly, in his family, and privately.
3. Sincerity, or a real design to serve God.

##### II. What is implied in being altogether a Christian?

1. Love to God.
2. Love to our neighbor.
3. Faith; not dead, speculative faith, but that which assures of forgiveness of sins, and is followed by a loving heart, keeping God's commandments.

## SERMON II.

## THE ALMOST CHRISTIAN.

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY,  
JULY 25, 1741.

“ *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* ”—ACTS XXVI. 28.

AND many there are who go thus far : ever since the Christian religion was in the world, there have been many in every age and nation, who were almost persuaded to be Christians. But, seeing it avails nothing before God to go *only thus far*, it highly imports us to consider,

First, What is implied in being *almost*,  
Secondly, What in being *altogether*, a Christian.

I. (I.) 1. Now, in the being *almost a Christian*, is implied, first, heathen honesty. No one, I suppose, will make any question of this : especially, since by heathen honesty here I mean, not that which is recommended in the writings of their philosophers only, but such as the common heathens expected one of another, and many of them actually practised. By the rules of this they were taught, that they ought not to be unjust ; not to take away their neighbour's goods, either by robbery or theft ; not to oppress the poor, neither to use extortion toward any ; not to cheat or overreach either the poor or rich, in whatsoever commerce they had with them ; to defraud no man of his right ; and, if it were possible, to owe no man any thing.

2. Again : the common heathens allowed, that some regard was to be paid to truth, as well as to justice. And, accordingly, they not only held him in abomination who was forsworn, who called God to witness to a lie ;

but him also who was known to be a slanderer of his neighbour, who falsely accused any man. And, indeed, little better did they esteem wilful liars of any sort; accounting them the disgrace of human kind, and the pests of society.

3. Yet again : there was a sort of love and assistance which they expected one from another. They expected whatever assistance any one could give another, without prejudice to himself. And this they extended not only to those little offices of humanity which are performed without any expense or labour, but likewise to the feeding the hungry, if they had food to spare; the clothing the naked with their own superfluous raiment; and in general, the giving to any that needed, such things as they needed not themselves. Thus far, in the lowest account of it, heathen honesty went; the first thing implied in the being *almost a Christian*.

(II.) 4. A second thing implied in the being *almost a Christian* is, the having a form of godliness; of that godliness which is prescribed in the gospel of Christ; the having the *outside of a real Christian*. Accordingly, the *almost Christian* does nothing which the gospel forbids. He taketh not the name of God in vain; he blesseth, and curseth not; he sweareth not at all, but his communication is, yea, yea; nay, nay. He profanes not the day of the Lord, nor suffers it to be profaned, even by the stranger that is within his gates. He not only avoids all actual adultery, fornication, and uncleanness, but every word or look that either directly or indirectly tends thereto; nay, and all idle words, abstaining both from detraction, backbiting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking, and from "all foolish talking and jesting," — *εὐτραπέλαια*, a kind of virtue in the heathen moralist's account;—briefly, from all conversation that is not "good to the use of edifying," and that, consequently, "grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption."

5. He abstains from "wine wherein is excess;" from revellings and gluttony. He avoids, as much as in him

lics, all strife and contention, continually enleavoured to live peaceably with all men. And, if he suffer wrong, he avengeth not himself, neither returns evil for evil. He is no railer, no brawler, no scoffer, either at the faults or infirmities of his neighbour. He does not willingly wrong, hurt, or grieve any man; but in all things acts and speaks by that plain rule, "Whatsoever thou wouldest not he should do unto thee, that do not thou to another."

6. And in doing good, he does not confine himself to cheap and easy offices of kindness, but labours and suffers for the profit of many, that by all means he may help some. In spite of toil or pain, "whatsoever his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with his might;" whether it be for his friends, or for his enemies; for the evil, or for the good. For, being "not slothful" in this, or in any "business," as he "hath opportunity" he doeth "good," all manner of good, "to all men;" and to their souls as well as their bodies. He reproves the wicked, instructs the ignorant, confirms the wavering, quickens the good, and comforts the afflicted. He labours to awaken those that sleep; to lead those whom God hath already awakened to the "Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness," that they may wash therein and be clean; and to stir up those who are saved through faith, to adorn the gospel of Christ in all things.

7. He that hath the form of godliness uses also the means of grace; yea, all of them, and at all opportunities. He constantly frequents the house of God; and that, not as the manner of some is, who come into the presence of the Most High, either loaded with gold and costly apparel, or in all the gaudy vanity of dress, and either by their unseasonable civilities to each other, or the impertinent gayety of their behaviour, disclaim all pretensions to the form as well as to the power of godliness. Would to God there were none even among ourselves who fall under the same condemnation! who come into this house, it may be, gazing about, or with all the signs of the most listless, careless indifference

though sometimes they may *seem* to use a prayer to God for his blessing on what they are entering upon; who, during that awful service, are either asleep, or reclined in the most convenient posture for it; or, as though they supposed God was asleep, talking with one another, or looking round, as utterly void of employment. Neither let these be accused of the form of godliness. No; he who has even this, behaves with seriousness and attention, in every part of that solemn service. More especially, when he approaches the table of the Lord, it is not with a light or careless behaviour, but with an air, gesture, and deportment, which speak nothing else but, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

5. To this, if we add the constant use of family prayer, by those who are masters of families, and the setting times apart for private addresses to God, with a daily seriousness of behaviour; he who uniformly practises this outward religion, has the form of godliness. There needs but one thing more in order to his being *almost a Christian*, and that is sincerity.

(III.) 9. By sincerity I mean, a real, inward principle of religion, from whence these outward actions flow. And, indeed, if we have not this, we have not heathen honesty; no, not so much of it as will answer the demand of a heathen Epicurean poet. Even this poor wretch, in his sober intervals, is able to testify,

Oderunt peccare boni, virtutis amore;  
Oderunt peccare mali, formidine pœnæ.\*

So that, if a man only abstains from doing evil in order to avoid punishment, *Non pasces in cruce corvos,*† saith the pagan: there, "thou hast thy reward." But even he will not allow such a harmless man as this to be so much as a *good heathen*. If then any man, from the same motive, viz., to avoid punishment, to avoid the

\* "Good men avoid sin from the love of virtue;  
Wicked men avoid sin from a fear of punishment."

† "Thou shalt not be hanged."

loss of his friends, or his gain, or his reputation, should not only abstain from doing evil, but also do ever so much good; yea, and use all the means of grace; yet we could not with any propriety say, this man is even *almost a Christian!* If he has no better principle in his heart, he is only a hypocrite altogether.

10. Sincerity, therefore, is necessarily implied in the being *almost a Christian*; a real design to serve God, a hearty desire to do his will. It is necessarily implied, that a man have a sincere view of pleasing God in all things; in all his conversation; in all his actions; in all he does, or leaves undone. This design, if any man be *almost a Christian*, runs through the whole tenor of his life. This is the moving principle, both in his doing good, his abstaining from evil, and his using the ordinances of God.

11. But here it will probably be inquired, "Is it possible that any man living should go so far as this, and, nevertheless, be *only almost a Christian*? What more than this can be implied in the being a *Christian altogether*?" I answer, first, that it is possible to go thus far, and yet be but *almost a Christian*, I learn, not only from the oracles of God, but also from the sure testimony of experience.

12. Brethren, great is "my boldness towards you in this behalf." And "forgive me this wrong," if I declare my own folly upon the housetop, for yours and the gospel's sake. Suffer me then to speak freely of myself, even as of another man. I am content to be basèd, so ye may be exalted, and to be yet more vile for the glory of my Lord.

13. I did go thus far for many years, as many of this place can testify; using diligence to eschew all evil, and to have a conscience void of offence; redeeming the time; buying up every opportunity of doing all good to all men; constantly and carefully using all the public and all the private means of grace; endeavouring after a steady seriousness of behaviour, at all times and in all places; and, God is my record, before whom

I stand, doing all this in sincerity; having a real design to serve God; a hearty desire to do his will in all things; to please him who had called me to "fight the good fight," and to "lay hold on eternal life." Yet my own conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, that all this time I was but *almost a Christian*.

II. If it be inquired, "What more than this is implied in the being *altogether a Christian*?" I answer,

(I.) 1. First, The love of God. For thus saith his word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Such a love is this as engrosses the whole heart, as takes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul, and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his God, his spirit continually "rejoiceth in God his Saviour." His delight is in the Lord, his Lord and his All, to whom "in every thing he giveth thanks. All his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name." His heart is ever crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Indeed, what can he desire beside God? Not the world, or the things of the world: for he is "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him." He is crucified to "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind: for "love is not puffed up;" but "he that dwelling in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," is less than nothing in his own eyes.

(II.) 2. The second thing implied in the being *altogether a Christian*, is, the love of our neighbour. For thus said our Lord, in the following words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." If any man ask, "Who is my neighbour?" we reply, Every man in the world; every child of His who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Nor may we in any wise except our enemies, or the enemies of God and their own souls. But every Christian loveth these also as himself, yea, "as Christ loved us." He that would more fully understand what

manner of love this is, may consider St Paul's description of it. It is "long-suffering and kind." It "envieth not." It is not rash or hasty in judging. It "is not puffed up;" but maketh him that loves, the least, the servant, of all. Love "doth not behave itself unseemly;" but becometh "all things to all men." She "seeketh not her own;" but only the good of others, that they may be saved. "Love is not provoked." It casteth out wrath, which he who hath is wanting in love. "It thinketh no evil. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

(III.) 3. There is yet one thing more that may be separately considered, though it cannot actually be separate from the preceding, which is implied in the being *altogether a Christian*; and that is the ground of all, even faith. Very excellent things are spoken of this throughout the oracles of God. "Every one," saith the beloved disciple, "that believeth is born of God." "To as many as received him gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." And "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Yea, our Lord himself declares, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and cometh not into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

4. But here let no man deceive his own soul. "It is diligently to be noted, the faith which bringeth not forth repentance, and love, and all good works, is not that right living faith, but a dead and devilish one. For, even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin; that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself very God; that, for our sakes, he suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting; that he rose again the third day; that he ascended into heaven; and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and at the end of the world shall come again to judge both the quick and dead. These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all that is

written in the Old and New Testament. And yet for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate, lacking the very true Christian faith.”\*

5. “The right and true Christian faith is,” (to go on in the words of our own Church,) “not only to believe that holy Scripture and the Articles of our Faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ. It is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God; whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments.”

6. Now, whosoever hath this faith, which “purifies the heart” (by the power of God, who dwelleth therein) from pride, anger, desire, “from all unrighteousness,” from “all filthiness of flesh and spirit;” which fills it with love stronger than death, both to God and to all mankind; love that doeth the works of God, glorying to spend and to be spent for all men, and that endureth with joy, not only the reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised, and hated of all men, but whatsoever the wisdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict;—whosoever has this faith, thus working by love, is not almost only, but altogether, a Christian.

7. But who are the living witnesses of these things? I beseech you, brethren, as in the presence of that God before whom “hell and destruction are without a covering,—how much more the hearts of the children of men!”—that each of you would ask his own heart, “Am I of that number? Do I so far practise justice, mercy and truth, as even the rules of heathen honesty require? If so, have I the very *outside* of a Christian? the form of godliness? Do I abstain from evil,—from whatsoever is forbidden in the written word of God? Do I, whatever good my hand findeth to do, do it with *my* might? Do I seriously use all the ordinances of

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\* Homily on the Salvation of Man.

God at all opportunities? And is all this done with a sincere design and desire to please God in all things?"

8. Are not many of you conscious that you never came thus far; that you have not been even *almost a Christian*; that you have not come up to the standard of heathen honesty; at least, not to the form of Christian godliness?—much less hath God seen sincerity in you, a real design of pleasing him in all things. You never so much as intended to devote all your words and works, your business, studies, diversions, to his glory. You never even designed or desired that whatsoever you did should be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and as such should be "a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God through Christ."

9. But, supposing you had, do good designs and good desires make a Christian? By no means, unless they are brought to good effect. "Hell is paved," saith one, "with good intentions." The great question of all, then, still remains. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart? Can you cry out, "My God, and my All?" Do you desire nothing but him? Are you happy in God? Is he your glory, your delight, your crown of rejoicing? And is this commandment written in your heart, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also?" Do you then love your neighbour as yourself? Do you love every man, even your enemies, even the enemies of God, as your own soul? as Christ loved you? Yea, dost thou believe that Christ loved thee, and gave himself for thee? Hast thou faith in his blood? Believest thou the Lamb of God hath taken away thy sins, and cast them as a stone into the depth of the sea? that he hath blotted out the handwriting that was against thee, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross? Hast thou indeed redemption through his blood, even the remission of thy sins? And doth his Spirit bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God?

10. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who now standeth in the midst of us, knoweth, that if

any man die without this faith and this love, good it were for him that he had never been born. Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and call upon thy God : call in the day when he may be found. Let him not rest, till he make his "goodness to pass before thee;" till he proclaim unto thee the name of the Lord, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." Let no man persuade thee, by vain words, to rest short of this prize of thy high calling. But cry unto him day and night, who, "while we were without strength, died for the ungodly," until thou knowest in whom thou hast believed, and canst say, "My Lord and my God!" Remember, "always to pray, and not to faint," till thou also canst lift up thy hand unto heaven, and declare to him that liveth for ever and ever, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee."

11. May we all thus experience what it is to be, not almost only, but altogether Christians; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus; knowing we have peace with God through Jesus Christ; rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and having the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us!

## *QUESTIONS ON SERMON II.*

Ques. 1. (I. 1.) What is implied in being almost a Christian?

Ques. 2. (I. 1.) What is meant by heathen honesty?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) Did any of them practice this? Can you mention an instance?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) Did they teach regard for truth?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) Did they love and assist each other?

Ques. 6. (II. 4.) What is the second thing implied in being an almost Christian?

Ques. 7. (II. 5.) What is said of temperance?

Ques. 8. (II. 6.) What is said of his doing good?

Ques. 9. (II. 7.) Does he use the means of grace?

Ques. 10. (II. 8.) What other duties does he perform?

Ques. 11. (III. 9.) What is meant by sincerity?

Ques. 12. (III. 10.) In what is sincerity necessarily implied?

Ques. 13. (III. 11.) Can one go as far as this, and still be only an almost Christian?

Ques. 14. (III. 12.) What does he say of himself?

Ques. 15. (III. 13.) How does he appeal to his hearers as witnesses?

Ques. 16. (II. 1.) What more is implied in being altogether a Christian?

Ques. 17. (II. 2.) What is the second thing?

Ques. 18. (III. 3.) What else is included?

Ques. 19. (III. 4.) What is said of the relation of faith to good works?

Ques. 20. (III. 5.) What Church does he mean?

Ques. 21. (III. 5.) From what book is this quotation taken?

Ans. From the "Book of Homilies," a series of sermons prepared by Archbishop Cranmer and others. These sermons, owing to the small number of competent preachers, were read publicly in the churches during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her successors. They form the standards of doctrine in connection with the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

Ques. 22. (III. 6.) What is the effect of true faith?

Ques. 23. (III. 7.) Are there any living witnesses of these truths?

Ques. 24. (III. 8.) What appeal does he make?

Ques. 25. (III. 10, 11.) How does the sermon conclude?

### SERMON III.

## INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THIS sermon was preached by Charles Wesley before the University of Oxford. His biographer says, "It is doubtful whether any sermon in the English language, or in any language whatever, has passed through so many editions, or has been a means of so much spiritual good." The close observer will see a remarkable likeness to the style of John Wesley, and at the same time several points of unlikeness. In both the sentences are short, clear, and strongly expressed. There is no superfluity of words, no redundancies of any kind. John Wesley especially is noted for the plainness of his speech. No person, even among the uneducated, can fail to understand his meaning. In this respect the brothers agreed, and by their agreement opposed the literary style prevalent in their day. Affected language, Latin words introduced where English words would have expressed the full meaning; the choice of long, difficult, and rare words of classical origin, and frequently used in senses they were not intended to express; high-flown and florid diction, interlarded with many quotations from Latin and Greek "hard to be understood" by the common people—these were the faults of style in the eighteenth century. The Wesleys learned, from their attendance upon the prisons and among the sick and poor of Oxford, to discard this pompous style of preaching and writing. As their only motive was to do good, and to do good first to those who needed it most, the poor and the neglected "lost sheep" of Israel, this simple

style of writing and speaking brought them into favor with the masses of the people. At the same time, by the attention given by the Wesleys to logic as a science to be studied and practiced, they became thoroughly qualified to defend the doctrines they taught. In this sermon the preacher shows a greater amount of poetic diction than was usual in the writings of his brother. But the same great truths were common to both: Repentance toward God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

### ANALYSIS OF SERMON III.

#### I. The sleepers described.

1. That state of natural insensibility, darkness, deceptive peace, and self-satisfaction, whether of the outwardly vicious, or of the good-natured professor of the religion of his fathers, or of the orthodox Pharisee, who has a form of godliness but denies its power.

2. However highly this estate may be esteemed by men, it is denounced by Christ. It is a state of death, of insensibility to spiritual things, in which the Spirit of God neither comforts, nor convinces of sin.

#### II. The exhortation enforced.

By the threatenings of God's word. By the responsibility of eternity and judgment. By the soul's want of the indwelling Spirit, the absence of the inward change, and of a good reason for hope of salvation.

#### III. Exposition of the promise.

God is light. By faith we receive his Spirit, through which we "know the things that are freely given to us of God." This experimental knowledge through the Spirit of truth is alone true Christianity. This conscious communion of the Holy Ghost is the doctrine of the English Church. Lamenting the overspreading iniquity of the land and of the University, the preacher concludes with a solemn appeal to God and to his congregation.

## SERMON III.

## AWAKE, THOU THAT SLEEPEST.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY, APRIL 4, 1742, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

“*Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*”—EPHES. v. 14.

IN discoursing on these words, I shall, with the help of God,

First, Describe the sleepers, to whom they are spoken :

Secondly, Enforce the exhortation, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead:” and,

Thirdly, Explain the promise made to such as do awake and arise : “Christ shall give thee light.”

I. 1. And first, as to the sleepers here spoken to. By sleep is signified the natural state of man ; that deep sleep of the soul, into which the sin of Adam hath cast all who spring from his loins : that supineness, indolence, and stupidity, that insensibility of his real condition, wherein every man comes into the world, and continues till the voice of God awakes him.

2. Now, “they that sleep, sleep in the night.” The state of nature is a state of utter darkness ; a state wherein “darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people.” The poor unawakened sinner, how much knowledge soever he may have as to other things, has no knowledge of himself : in this respect, “he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” He knows not that he is a fallen spirit, whose only business in the present world is, to recover from his fall, to regain that image of God wherein he was created. He sees *no necessity* for the *one thing needful*, even that inward universal change, that “birth from above,” figured out by baptism, which is the beginning of that total renovation,

that sanctification of spirit, soul, and body, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

3. Full of all diseases as he is, he fancies himself in perfect health. Fast bound in misery and iron, he dreams that he is at liberty. He says, "Peace! Peace!" while the devil, as "a strong man armed," is in full possession of his soul. He sleeps on still, and takes his rest, though hell is moved from beneath to meet him; though the pit, from whence there is no return, hath opened its mouth to swallow him up. A fire is kindled around him, yet he knoweth it not; yea, it burns him, yet he lays it not to heart.

4. By one who sleeps, we are, therefore, to understand (and would to God we might all understand it!) a sinner satisfied in his sins; contented to remain in his fallen state, to live and die without the image of God; one who is ignorant both of his disease, and of the only remedy for it; one who never was warned, or never regarded the warning voice of God, "to flee from the wrath to come;" one that never yet saw he was in danger of hell-fire, or cried out in the earnestness of his soul, "What must I do to be saved?"

5. If this sleeper be not outwardly vicious, his sleep is usually the deepest of all: whether he be of the Lacedæmonian spirit, "neither cold nor hot," but a quiet, rational, inoffensive, good-natured professor of the religion of his fathers; or whether he be zealous and orthodox, and, "after the most straitest sect of our religion," live "a Pharisee;" that is, according to the scriptural account, one that justifies himself; one that labours to establish his own righteousness, as the ground of his acceptance with God.

6. This is he, who, "having a form of godliness, denies the power thereof;" yea, and probably reviles it wheresoever it is found, as mere extravagance and delusion. Meanwhile, the wretched self-deceiver thanks God, that he is "not as other men are; adulterers, unjust, extortioners:" no, he doeth no wrong to any man. He "fasts twice in a week," uses all the means of grace,

is constant at church and sacrament; yea, and "gives tithes of all that he has;" does all the good that he can; "touching the righteousness of the law," he is "blameless:" he wants nothing of godliness, but the power; nothing of religion, but the spirit; nothing of Christianity, but the truth and the life.

7. But know ye not, that, however highly esteemed among men such a Christian as this may be, he is an abomination in the sight of God, and an heir of every wo which the Son of God, yesterday, to-day, and for ever, denounces against "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites?" He hath "made clean the outside of the cup and the platter," but within is full of all filthiness. "An evil disease cleaveth still unto him, so that his inward parts are very wickedness." Our Lord fitly compares him to a "painted sepulchre," which "appears beautiful without;" but, nevertheless, is "full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." The bones indeed are no longer dry; the sinews and flesh are come upon them, and the skin covers them above: but there is no breath in them, no Spirit of the living God. And, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." "Ye are Christ's, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you:" but if not, God knoweth that ye abide in death, even until now.

8. This is another character of the sleeper here spoken of. He abides in death, though he knows it not. He is dead unto God, "dead in trespasses and sins." For, "to be carnally minded is death." Even as it is written, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men;" not only temporal death, but likewise spiritual and eternal. "Li that day that thou eatest," said God to Adam, "thou shalt surely die:" not bodily, (unless as he then became mortal,) but spiritually: thou shalt lose the life of thy soul; thou shalt die to God; shalt be separated from him, thy essential life and happiness.

9. Thus first was dissolved the vital union of our soul with God; insomuch that "in the midst of" natu

ral "life, we are" now "in" spiritual "death." And herein we remain till the Second Adam becomes a quickening Spirit to us; till he raises the dead, the dead in sin, in pleasure, riches, or honours. But, before any dead soul can live, he "hears" (hearkens to) "the voice of the Son of God:" he is made sensible of his lost estate, and receives the sentence of death in himself. He knows himself to be "dead while he liveth;" dead to God, and all the things of God; having no more power to perform the actions of a living Christian, than a dead body to perform the functions of a living man.

10. And most certain it is, that one dead in sin has not "senses exercised to discern spiritual good and evil." "Having eyes, he sees not; he hath ears, and hears not." He doth not "taste and see that the Lord is gracious" He "hath not seen God at any time," nor "heard his voice," nor "handled the word of life." In vain is the name of Jesus "like ointment poured forth, and all his garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia." The soul that sleepeth in death hath no perception of any objects of this kind. His heart is "past feeling," and understandeth none of these things.

11. And hence, having no spiritual senses, no inlets of spiritual knowledge, the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; nay, he is so far from receiving them, that whatsoever is spiritually discerned is mere foolishness unto him. He is not content with being utterly ignorant of spiritual things, but he denies the very existence of them. And spiritual sensation itself is to him the foolishness of folly. "How," saith he, "can these things be? How can any man *know* that he is alive to God?" Even as you know that your body is now alive. Faith is the life of the soul; and if ye have this life abiding in you, ye want no marks to evidence it to *yourself*, but *ελεγχος Πνευματος*, that divine consciousness, that *witness of God*, which is more and greater than ten thousand human witnesses.

12. If he doth not now bear witness with thy spirit, that thou art a child of God, O that he might convince

thee, thou poor unawakened sinner, by his demonstration and power, that thou art a child of the devil! O that, as I prophesy, there might now be "a noise and a shaking;" and may "the bones come together, bone to his bone!" Then "come from the four winds, O Breath! and breathe on these slain, that they may live!" And do not ye harden your hearts, and resist the Holy Ghost, who even now is come to convince you of sin, "because you believe not on the name of the only begotten Son of God."

II. 1. Wherefore, "awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." God calleth thee now by my mouth; and bids thee know thyself, thou fallen spirit, thy true state and only concern below. "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise! Call upon thy God, if so be thy God will think upon thee, that thou perish not." A mighty tempest is stirred up round about thee, and thou art sinking into the depths of perdition, the gulf of God's judgments. If thou wouldest escape them, cast thyself into them. "Judge thyself, and thou shalt not be judged of the Lord."

2. Awake, awake! Stand up this moment, lest thou "drink at the Lord's hand the cup of his fury." Stir up thyself to lay hold on the Lord, the Lord thy righteousness, mighty to save! "Shake thyself from the dust." At least, let the earthquake of God's threatenings shake thee. Awake, and cry out with the trembling jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" And never rest till thou believest on the Lord Jesus, with a faith which is his gift, by the operation of his Spirit.

3. If I speak to any one of you, more than to another, it is to thee, who thinkest thyself unconcerned in this exhortation. "I have a message from God unto thee." In his name, I warn thee "to flee from the wrath to come." Thou unholy soul, see thy picture in condemned Peter, lying in the dark dungeon, between the soldiers, bound with two chains, the keepers before the door keeping the prison. The night is far spent, the morning is at hand, when thou art to be brought forth

to execution. And in these dreadful circumstances thou art fast asleep ; thou art fast asleep in the devil's arms, on the brink of the pit, in the jaws of everlasting destruction !

4. O may the angel of the Lord come upon thee, and the light shine into thy prison ! And mayest thou feel the stroke of an Almighty Hand, raising thee, with, "Arise up quickly, gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee, and follow me."

5. Awake thou everlasting spirit, out of thy dream of worldly happiness ! Did not God create thee for himself ? Then thou canst not rest till thou retest in him. Return, thou wanderer ! Fly back to thy ark. This is not thy home. Think not of building tabernacles here. Thou art but a stranger, a sojourner upon earth ; a creature of a day, but just launching out into an unchangeable state. Make haste. Eternity is at hand. Eternity depends on this moment. An eternity of happiness, or an eternity of misery.

6. In what state is thy soul ? Was God, while I am yet speaking, to require it of thee, art thou ready to meet death and judgment ? Canst thou stand in His sight, who is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity ?" Art thou "meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light ?" Hast thou "fought a good fight, and kept the faith ?" Hast thou secured the one thing needful ? Hast thou recovered the image of God, even righteousness and true holiness ? Hast thou put off the old man, and put on the new ? Art thou clothed upon with Christ ?

7. Hast thou oil in thy lamp ? grace in thy heart ? Dost thou "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength ?" Is that mind in thee, which was also in Christ Jesus ? Art thou a Christian indeed ; that is, a new creature ? Are old things passed away, and all things become new ?

8. Art thou a "partaker of the divine nature ?" Knowest thou not, that "Christ is in thee, except thou

be reprobate?" Knowest thou that God "dwelleth in thee, and thou in God, by his Spirit, which he hath given thee?" Knowest thou not that "thy body is a temple of the Holy Ghost, which thou hast of God?" Hast thou the witness in thyself? the earnest of thine inheritance? Hast thou "received the Holy Ghost?" Or dost thou start at the question, not knowing "whether there be any Holy Ghost?"

9. If it offends thee, be thou assured, that thou neither art a Christian, nor desirest to be one. Nay, thy very prayer is turned into sin; and thou hast solemnly mocked God this very day, by praying for the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, when thou didst not believe there was any such thing to be received.

10. Yet, on the authority of God's word, and our own Church, I must repeat the question, "Hast thou received the Holy Ghost?" If thou hast not, thou art not yet a Christian. For a Christian is a man that is "anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power." Thou art not yet made a partaker of pure religion and undefiled. Dost thou know what religion is? that it is a participation of the divine nature; the life of God in the soul of man; Christ formed in the heart; "Christ in thee, the hope of glory?" happiness and holiness; heaven begun upon earth? "a kingdom of God within thee; not meat and drink," no outward thing; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost?" an everlasting kingdom brought into thy soul; a "peace of God, that passeth all understanding;" a "joy unspeakable, and full of glory?"

11. Knowest thou that "in Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith that worketh by love;" but a new creation? Seest thou the necessity of that inward change, that spiritual birth, that life from the dead, that holiness? And art thou thoroughly convinced, that without it no man shall see the Lord? Art thou labouring after it? "giving all diligence to make thy calling and election sure?" "working out thy salvation with fear and trembling?"

agonizing to enter in at the strait gate?" Art thou in earnest about thy soul? And canst thou tell the Searcher of hearts, "Thou, O God, art the thing that I long for! Lord, thou knowest all things! thou knowest that I *would* love thee!"

12. Thou hopest to be saved; but what reason hast thou to give of the hope that is in thee? Is it because thou hast done no harm? or because thou hast done much good? or because thou art not like other men; but wise, or learned, or honest, and morally good; esteemed of men, and of a fair reputation? Alas! all this will never bring thee to God. It is in his account lighter than vanity. Dost thou know Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent? Hath he taught thee, that "by grace we are saved through faith; and that not of ourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast?" Hast thou received the faithful saying, as the whole foundation of thy hope, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners?" Hast thou learned what that meaneth, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance? I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep?" Art thou (he that heareth, let him understand!) lost, dead, *damned already*? Dost thou know thy deserts? Dost thou feel thy wants? Art thou "poor in spirit?" mourning for God, and refusing to be comforted? Is the prodigal "come to himself," and well content to be therefore thought "beside himself" by those who are still feeding upon the husks which he hath left? Art thou willing to live godly in Christ Jesus? And dost thou therefore suffer persecution? Do men say all manner of evil against thee falsely, for the Son of man's sake?

13. O that in all these questions ye may hear the voice that wakes the dead; and feel that hammer of the word, which breaketh the rocks in pieces? "If ye will hear his voice to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts." Now, "awake, thou that sleepest" in spiritual death, that thou sleep not in death eternal! Feel thy lost estate, and "arise from the dead." Leave thine old

companions in sin and death. Follow thou Jesus, and .et the dead bury their dead. "Save thyself from this untoward generation." "Come out from among them, and be thou separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and the Lord shall receive thee." "Christ shall give thee light."

III. 1. This promise I come, lastly, to explain. And how encouraging a consideration is this, that whosoever thou art, who obeyest his call, thou canst not seek his face in vain! If thou even now "awakest and arisest from the dead," he hath bound himself to "give thee light." "The Lord shall give thee grace and glory;" the light of his grace here, and the light of his glory when thou receivest the crown that fadeth not away. "Thy light shall break forth as the morning, and thy darkness be as the noonday." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shall shine in thy heart; to give the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." "On them that fear the Lord shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." And in that day it shall be said unto thee, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." For Christ shall reveal himself in thee: and he is the true Light.

2. God is light, and will give himself to every awakened sinner, that waiteth for him: and thou shalt then be a temple of the living God, and Christ shall "dwell in thy heart by faith:" and, "being rooted and grounded in love, thou shalt be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

3. Ye see your calling, brethren. We are called to be "an habitation of God through his Spirit;" and, through his Spirit dwelling in us, to be saints here, and partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. So exceeding great are the promises which are given unto us, actually given unto us who believe! For by faith we "receive, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God,"—the sum of all the promises.

—“that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

4. The Spirit of Christ is that great gift of God which, at sundry times, and in divers manners, he hath promised to man, and hath fully bestowed since the time that Christ was glorified. Those promises, before made to the fathers, he hath thus fulfilled: “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.” (Ezek. xxxvi. 27.) “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” (Isaiah xlv. 3.)

5. Ye may all be living witnesses of these things; of remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” “Who among you is there that feareth the Lord, and” yet walketh on “in darkness, and hath no light?” I ask thee, in the name of Jesus, Believest thou that his arm is not shortened at all? that he is still mighty to save? that he is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever? that he hath now power on earth to forgive sins? “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven.” God, for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven thee. Receive this, “not as the word of man; but as it is indeed, the word of God;” and thou art justified freely through faith. Thou shalt be sanctified also through faith which is in Jesus, and shalt set to thy seal, even thine, that “God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.”

6. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you; and suffer ye the word of exhortation, even from one the least esteemed in the Church. Your conscience beareth you witness in the Holy Ghost, that these things are so, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. “This is eternal life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.” This experimental knowledge, and this alone, is true Christianity. He is a Christian who hath received the Spirit of Christ. He is not a Christian who hath not received him. Neither is

it possible to have received him, and not know it. "For at that day," (when he cometh, saith our Lord,) "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." This is that "Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him : but ye know him ; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." (John xiv. 17.)

7. The world cannot receive him, but utterly reject the Promise of the Father, contradicting and blaspheming. But every spirit which confesseth not this is not of God. Yea, "this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come into the world ; and even now it is in the world." He is Antichrist whosoever denies the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, or that the indwelling Spirit of God is the common privilege of all believers, the blessing of the gospel, the unspeakable gift, the universal promise, the criterion of a real Christian.

8. It nothing helps them to say, "We do not deny the assistance of God's Spirit ; but only this *inspiration*, this *receiving the Holy Ghost*, and being sensible of it. It is only this *feeling of the Spirit*, this being *moved* by the Spirit, or *filled* with it, which we deny to have any place in sound religion." But, in *only denying this*, you deny the whole Scriptures ; the whole truth, and promise, and testimony of God.

9. Our own excellent Church knows nothing of this devilish distinction ; but speaks plainly of "feeling the Spirit of Christ ;"\* of being "moved by the Holy Ghost,"† and knowing and "feeling there is no other name than that of Jesus,"‡ whereby we can receive life and salvation. She teaches us all to pray for the "inspiration of the Holy Spirit ;"§ yes, that we may be "filled with the Holy Ghost."|| Nay, and every presbyter of hers professes to receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. Therefore, to deny any of these,

\* Art. 17.

† Visitation of the sick.

‡ Order of Confirmation.

† Office of ordaining Deacons.

‡ Collect before the Holy Communion.

is, in effect, to renounce the Church of England as well as the whole Christian revelation.

10. But "the wisdom of God" was always "foolishness with men." No marvel, then, that the great mystery of the gospel should be now also "hid from the wise and prudent," as well as in the days of old; that it should be almost universally denied, ridiculed, and exploded, as mere frenzy; and that all who dare avow it still are branded with the names of madmen and enthusiasts. This is "that falling away" which was to come; that general apostasy of all orders and degrees of men, which we even now find to have overspread the earth. "Run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem, and see if ye can find a man," a man that loveth the Lord his God with all his heart, and serveth him with all his strength. How does our own land mourn (that we look no farther) under the overflowings of ungodliness! What villanies of every kind are committed day by day; yea, too often with impunity, by those who sin with a high hand, and glory in their shame! Who can reckon up the oaths, curses, profaneness, blasphemies; the lying, slandering, evil-speaking; the Sabbath-breaking, gluttony, drunkenness, revenge; the whoredoms, adulteries, and various uncleanness; the frauds, injustice, oppression, extortion, which overspread our land as a flood?

11. And even among those who have kept themselves pure from those grosser abominations; how much anger and pride, how much sloth and idleness, how much softness and effeminacy, how much luxury and self-indulgence, how much covetousness and ambition, how much thirst of praise, how much love of the world, how much fear of man, is to be found! Meanwhile, how little of true religion! For, where is he that loveth either God or his neighbour, as He hath given us commandment? On the one hand, are those who have not so much as the form of godliness; on the other, those who have the form only: there stands the *open*, there the *painted* sepulchre. So that in very deed, whosoever were ear

nestly to behold any public gathering together of the people, (I fear those in our churches are not to be excepted,) might easily perceive, "that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees:" the one having almost as little concern about religion, as if there were "no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit;" and the other making it a mere lifeless form, a dull round of external performances, without either true faith, or the love of God, or joy in the Holy Ghost!

12. Would to God I could except us of this place! "Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God, for you is, that ye may be saved" from this overflowing of ungodliness; and that here may its proud waves be stayed! But is it so indeed? God knoweth, yea, and our own consciences, it is not. Ye have not kept yourselves pure. Corrupt are we also and abominable; and few are there that understand any more; few that worship God in spirit and in truth. We, too, are "a generation that set not our hearts aright, and whose spirit cleaveth not steadfastly unto God." He hath appointed us indeed to be "the salt of the earth: but if the salt hath lost its savour, it is thenceforth good for nothing; but to be cast out, and to be trodden underfoot of men."

13. And "shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Yea, we know not how soon he may say to the sword, "Sword, go through this land!" He hath given us long space to repent. He lets us alone this year also: but he warns and awakens us by thunder. His judgments are abroad in the earth; and we have all reason to expect the heaviest of all, even that he "should come unto us quickly, and remove our candlestick out of its place, except we repent and do the first works;" unless we return to the principles of the Reformation, the truth and simplicity of the gospel. Perhaps we are now resisting the last effort of divine grace to save us. Perhaps we have well nigh "filled up the measure of our iniquities," by rejecting the counsel of God against ourselves, and casting out his messengers.

14. O God, "in the midst of wrath, remember mercy!" Be glorified in our reformation, not in our destruction! Let us "hear the rod, and him that appointed it!" Now, that thy "judgments are abroad in the earth," let the inhabitants of the world "learn righteousness!"

15. My brethren, it is high time for us to awake out of sleep before the "great trumpet of the Lord be blown," and our land become a field of blood. O may we speedily see the things that make for our peace, before they are hid from our eyes! "Turn thou us, O good Lord, and let thine anger cease from us. O Lord, look down from heaven, behold and visit this vine;" and cause us to know "the time of our visitation." "Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name! O deliver us, and be merciful to our sins, for thy name's sake? And so we will not go back from thee. O let us live, and we shall call upon thy name. Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts! Show the light of thy countenance, and we shall be whole."

"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.—Amen!"

### QUESTIONS ON SERMON III.

- Ques. 1. How is this sermon divided?
- Ques. 2. (I. 1.) What is signified by sleep?
- Ques. 3. (I. 2.) What is said of the state of nature?
- Ques. 4. (I. 3.) What further is said of carnal security?
- Ques. 5. (I. 4.) Can a sinner be satisfied in his sin?
- Ques. 6. (I. 5.) What is said of those not openly vicious?
- Ques. 7. (I. 6.) What is said of the self-righteous man?
- Ques. 8. (I. 7.) How are these esteemed by God?
- Ques. 9. (I. 8.) What is said of those who are dead in trespasses and sins?
- Ques. 10. (I. 9.) What is said of the Second Adam?
- Ques. 11. (I. 10.) What is said of those who have no perception of spiritual things?
- Ques. 12. (I. 11.) What is the life of the soul?
- Ques. 13. (I. 12.) What is said of the witness of the Spirit?
- Ques. 14. (II. 1, 2.) How is the exhortation enforced?
- Ques. 15. (II. 3.) To whom is the unconcerned soul likened?
- Ques. 16. (II. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.) Mention the figures of speech employed to describe the state of the unawakened soul.
- Ques. 17. (II. 8.) What is meant by being a partaker of the divine nature?
- Ques. 18. (II. 9.) If these searching questions give offense, what is the inference?
- Ques. 19. (II. 10.) What is religion as here defined?
- Ques. 20. (II. 11.) What is meant by circumcision and uncircumcision availing nothing? *Ans.* That outward forms

are not essential, whilst the change of heart and inward piety are necessary to every true Christian.

Ques. 21. (II. 12.) What are the signs of an awakened sinner?

Ques. 22. (III. 1, 2.) What encouraging consideration is mentioned?

Ques. 23. (III. 3.) What is our calling?

Ques. 24. (III. 4.) What is the great gift of God?

Ques. 25. (III. 5.) Of what may all be living witnesses?

Ques. 26. (III. 6.) What is true Christianity?

Ques. 27. (III. 7.) What is the spirit of Antichrist?

Ques. 28. (III. 8.) What do they deny who reject the doctrine taught by the preacher?

Ques. 29. (III. 9.) What Church is referred to here? *Ans.* The Church of England.

Ques. 30. (III. 10.) What does he say of the prevailing wickedness and apostasy of the age?

Ques. 31. (III. 11.) What of those who do not commit the grosser abominations?

Ques. 32. (III. 12.) What does he say of the audience to whom he is preaching? Does he except them?

Ques. 33. (III. 13.) What is meant by removing the candlestick out of its place? *Ans.* By taking away the privileges abused, and leaving the work of God to be carried on by others.

Ques. 34. (III. 14.) What appeal does he make?

Ques. 35. (III. 15, 16.) How is this sermon concluded?

Ques. 36. Ought we not, as ministers called to labor for the salvation of the world, to examine ourselves by the tests given in this sermon? Are we fully awakened to feel our own weakness, and conscious that all our help must come from God? The standard of Christian life which we bear in the sight of men ought not to condemn us; therefore, with all diligence let us proclaim the truth of God in love and meekness, becoming "living epistles, known and read of all men."

SERMON IV.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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ACCORDING to the statutes of the University of Oxford, "all that are masters of arts, and on the foundation of any college, are set down in a roll as they take their degree, and in that order preach before the University, or pay three guineas (about fifteen dollars) for a preacher in their stead." In August, 1744, it came to Mr. John Wesley's turn to preach. "He came to Oxford some time before, and preached frequently every day in courts, public houses, and elsewhere. On Friday morning, having held forth twice in private, at five and at eight, he came to St. Mary's at ten o'clock. There were present the vice-chancellor, the proctors, most of the heads of houses, a vast number of gownsmen, and a multitude of private people, with many of Wesley's own people, both brethren and sisters." This account is given by one who was present on the memorable occasion. "His black hair, quite smooth," says this writer, "and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was soft, short, and conformable to the rules of the University. His text was Acts iv. 31. He spoke it very slowly, and with an agreeable emphasis."

The celebrated Dr. Kennicott, the editor of the Hebrew Bible, is the writer just quoted. He was then about twenty-six years of age, and just entering upon his distinguished career. He states that he admired some passages of this sermon, and thought Mr. Wesley's denunciation of the young gownsmen as a "generation of triflers" was just, but he

blamed the preacher for saying that Oxford was not a *Christian* city. "He accused the whole body (and confessed himself to be one of the number) of the sin of perjury; and for this reason, because, upon becoming members of a college, every person takes an oath to observe the statutes of the University, and no one observes them in all things. Had these things been omitted, and his censures moderated, I think his discourse, as to style and delivery, would have been uncommonly pleasing to others as well as to myself. He is allowed to be a man of great parts, and that by the excellent Dean of Christ Church (Dr. Conybeare); for the day he preached the Dean generously said of him, 'John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast.' However, the vice-chancellor sent for the sermon, and I hear the heads of colleges intend to show their resentment."

This account of Mr. Wesley's sermon is exceedingly interesting. It comes from a man who became one of the foremost scholars in the world, and shows in a remarkable manner how little there really was of true spirituality in the religion of the University at that time. If Mr. Wesley had complimented his audience; if he had withheld unpleasant truths; like many other preachers of the day, had he left their consciences undisturbed, to sleep in sin and the neglect of duty toward God and men, he would have been applauded to the echo. How grandly does the simple-hearted preacher of the gospel appear on this occasion! They cannot answer his argument; they cannot deny his statements; but they can "show their resentment." And this they did effectually. Wesley never appeared before the University again. When his turn came next, they paid his fine, and supplied a preacher in his stead—one that would cry "Peace, peace, when there was no peace."

It may be useful to contrast with this course of Mr. Wesley the conduct of a celebrated court preacher in the time of Louis XIV. of France. That renowned monarch was ex-

ceedingly sensitive to every allusion to the subject of death. On one occasion, while preaching before the king, the orator took occasion to make the remark, "All men are mortal." Observing a change on the face of the king, and perceiving that he had intruded the forbidden subject upon the proud and licentious monarch, the preacher paused and corrected his statement by saying, "*Almost* all men are mortal." The absurdity and folly of this attempt to recall a self-evident truth could not fail to arrest the attention of the audience, and, without raising himself in the estimation of Louis, the preacher richly merited the contempt of every intelligent hearer. It is sometimes a question of taste as to the proper terms in which sin should be rebuked in public. The preacher will never go astray, however, who is careful always "to speak the truth in love." Fear of man should be banished from the pulpit, but the spirit of charity should always animate every rebuke, whether spoken privately or in the pulpit. We ought to denounce sin, but in so doing let us show an earnest desire to save the sinner.

The student will find nothing in this sermon that is calculated to offend the most sensitive congregation, except the plain truth of the gospel. If they took offense, it was because their own consciences accused them. An honest man could do no less than speak his own convictions; none but a brave man could dare to deliver the whole counsel of God in that presence. To speak the truth in love is a duty that the faithful minister must discharge, or his own soul will receive hurt. It is well to be considerate and mindful of the feelings of others, but he is not worthy of the great commission who shrinks from a conscious duty because of the face of man.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON IV.

Historical summary of the day of Pentecost. The extraordinary and ordinary gifts of the Spirit at this time. The latter alone is the subject of this discourse.

I. Christianity as beginning to exist in individuals. Con-

viction of sin, repentance, faith, followed by the spirit of adoption. The fruits of this spirit—peace, joy, love to God and to man—leading to all inward holiness, abstinence from sin, use of the means of grace, and practice of good works.

II. Christianity as spreading from one to another. God's rule. Impelling love. Resulting labors. The success of their work. Opposition and persecution. Ending in still greater victories.

III. Christianity as covering the earth. Predicted in the Old Testament. In the New. Ideal description of the state of the world.

IV. Application. Where does this Christianity now exist? Is this a Christian country? Is this a Christian city? Appeal to the officers, professors, clergymen, and youth of the University. Solemn appeal to God for salvation.

## SERMON IV.

## SCRIPTURAL CHRISTIANITY.

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY,  
ON AUGUST 24, 1744.

“*And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.*”—ACTS iv. 31.

1. THE same expression occurs in the second chapter, where we read, “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all” (the apostles, with the women, and the mother of Jesus, and his brethren) “with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost:” one immediate effect whereof was, “they began to speak with other tongues;” insomuch that both the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the other strangers who “came together, when this was noised abroad, heard them speak, in their several tongues, the wonderful works of God.” (Acts ii. 1–6.)

2. In this chapter we read, that when the apostles and brethren had been praying, and praising God, “the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Not that we find any visible appearance here, such as had been in the former instance: nor are we informed that the *extraordinary gifts* of the Holy Ghost were then given to all or any of them; such as the gifts of “healing, of working” other “miracles, of prophecy, of discerning spirits, the speaking with divers kinds of tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.” (1 Cor. xii. 9, 10.)

3. Whether these gifts of the Holy Ghost were designed to remain in the church throughout all ages, and whether or no they will be restored at the nearer ap-

proach of the "restitution of all things," are questions which it is not needful to decide. But it is needful to observe this, that, even in the infancy of the church, God divided them with a sparing hand. Were all even then prophets? Were all workers of miracles? Had all the gifts of healing? Did all speak with tongues? No, in no wise. Perhaps not one in a thousand. Probably none but the teachers in the church, and only some of them. (1 Cor. xii. 28-30.) It was, therefore, for a more excellent purpose than this, that "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."

4. It was to give them (what none can deny to be essential to all Christians in all ages) the mind which was in Christ, those holy fruits of the Spirit, which whosoever hath not, is none of his; to fill them with "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness;" (Gal. v. 22-24;) to endue them with faith, (perhaps it might be rendered, *fidelity*,) with meekness and temperance; to enable them to crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts, its passions and desires; and, in consequence of that inward change, to fulfil all outward righteousness; to "walk as Christ also walked," in "the work of faith, in the patience of hope, the labour of love." (1 Thess. i. 3.)

5. Without busying ourselves, then, in curious, needless inquiries, touching those *extraordinary* gifts of the Spirit, let us take a nearer view of these his *ordinary* fruits, which we are assured will remain throughout all ages;—of that great work of God among the children of men, which we are used to express by one word, "Christianity;" not as it implies a set of opinions, a system of doctrines, but as it refers to men's hearts and lives. And this Christianity it may be useful to consider under three distinct views:

I. As beginning to exist in individuals:

II. As spreading from one to another:

III. As covering the earth.

I design to close these considerations with a plain, practical application.

I. 1 And, first, let us consider Christianity in its rise, as beginning to exist in individuals.

Suppose, then, one of those who heard the Apostle Peter preaching repentance and remission of sins, was pricked to the heart, was convinced of sin, repented, and then believed in Jesus. By this faith of the operation of God, which was the very substance, or subsistence, of things hoped for, (Heb. xi. 1,) the demonstrative evidence of invisible things, he instantly received the Spirit of adoption, whereby he now cried, "Abba, Father." (Rom. vii. 15.) Now first it was that he could call Jesus Lord, by the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. xii. 3,) the Spirit itself bearing witness with his spirit that he was a child of God. (Rom. viii. 16.) Now it was that he could truly say, "I live not, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20.)

2. This, then, was the very essence of his faith, a divine *ελεγχος* (*evidence* or *conviction*) of the love of God the Father, through the Son of his love, to him a sinner, now accepted in the Beloved. And "being justified by faith, he had peace with God," (Rom. v. 1,) yea, "the peace of God ruling in his heart;" a peace which, passing all understanding, (*παρα νοον*, all barely rational conception,) kept his heart and mind from all doubt and fear, through the knowledge of him in whom he had believed. He could not, therefore, "be afraid of any evil tidings;" for his "heart stood fast, believing in the Lord." He feared not what man could do unto him, knowing the very hairs of his head were all numbered. He feared not all the powers of darkness, whom God was daily bruising under his feet. Least of all was he afraid to die; nay, he desired to "depart, and to be with Christ;" (Phil. i. 23;) who, "through death, had destroyed him that had the power of death, even the devil; and delivered them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime," till then, "subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 15.)

3. His soul, therefore, magnified the Lord, and his spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour. "He rejoiced in him with joy unspeakable," who had reconciled him to God, even the Father; "in whom he had redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." He rejoiced in that witness of God's Spirit with his spirit, that he was a child of God; and more abundantly, "in hope of the glory of God;" in hope of the glorious image of God, and full renewal of his soul in righteousness and true holiness; and in hope of that crown of glory, that "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

4. "The love of God was also shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him." (Rom. v. 5.) "Because he was a son, God had sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal. iv. 6.) And that filial love of God was continually increased by the witness he had in himself (1 John v. 10) of God's pardoning love to him; by "beholding what manner of love it was which the Father had bestowed upon him, that he should be called a child of God." (1 John iii. 1.) So that God was the desire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart; his portion in time and in eternity.

5. He that thus *loved* God could not but love his brother also; and "not in word only, but in deed and in truth." "If God," said he, "so loved us, we ought also to love one another;" (1 John iv. 11;) yea, every soul of man, as "the mercy of God is over all his works." (Psalm cxlv. 9.) Agreeably hereto, the affection of this lover of God embraced all mankind for his sake; not excepting those whom he had never seen in the flesh, or those of whom he knew nothing more than that they were "the offspring of God," for whose souls his Son had died; not excepting the "evil" and "unthankful;" and least of all his enemies, those who hated, or persecuted, or despitefully used him for his Master's sake. These had a peculiar place, both in his heart and in his prayers. He loved them, "even as Christ loved us"

6. And "love is not puffed up." (1 Cor. xiii. 4.) It abases to the dust every soul wherein it dwells. Accordingly, he was lowly of heart, little, mean, and vile in his own eyes. He neither sought nor received the praise of men, but that which cometh of God only. He was meek and long-suffering, gentle to all, and easy to be entreated. Faithfulness and truth never forsook him; they were "bound about his neck, and wrote on the table of his heart." By the same Spirit he was enabled to be temperate in all things, refraining his soul even as a weaned child. He was "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him;" superior to "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." By the same almighty love was he saved both from passion and pride; from lust and vanity; from ambition and covetousness; and from every temper which was not in Christ.

7. It may be easily believed, he who had this love in his heart would work no evil to his neighbour. It was impossible for him, knowingly and designedly, to do harm to any man. He was at the greatest distance from cruelty and wrong, from any unjust or unkind action. With the same care did he "set a watch before his mouth, and keep the door of his lips," lest he should offend in tongue, either against justice, or against mercy or truth. He put away all lying, falsehood, and fraud; neither was guile found in his mouth. He spake evil of no man; nor did an unkind word ever come out of his lips.

8. And as he was deeply sensible of the truth of that word, "Without me ye can do nothing," and, consequently, of the need he had to be watered of God every moment; so he continued daily in all the ordinances of God, the stated channels of his grace to man: "in the apostles' doctrine," or teaching, receiving that food of the soul with all readiness of heart; in "the breaking of bread," which he found to be the communion of the body of Christ; and "in the prayers" and praises offered up by the great congregation. And thus, he

daily "grew in grace," increasing in strength, in the knowledge and love of God.

9. But it did not satisfy him, barely to abstain from doing evil. His soul was athirst to do good. The language of his heart continually was, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." "My Lord went about doing good; and shall not I tread in his steps?" As he had opportunity, therefore, if he could do no good of a higher kind, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, helped the fatherless or stranger, visited and assisted them that were sick or in prison. He gave all his goods to feed the poor. He rejoiced to labour or to suffer for them; and whereinsoever he might profit another, there especially to "deny himself." He counted nothing too dear to part with for them, as well remembering the word of his Lord, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. xxv. 40.)

10. Such was Christianity in its rise. Such was a Christian in ancient days. Such was every one of those, who, when they heard the threatenings of the chief priests and elders, "lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost. The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul:" so did the love of Him in whom they had believed constrain them to love one another! "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common:" so fully were they crucified to the world, and the world crucified to them! "And they continued steadfastly with one accord in the Apostles' doctrine, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayer." (Acts ii. 42.) "And great grace was upon them all; neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts iv. 31-35.)

II. 1. Let us take a view, in the second place, of this Christianity, as spreading from one to another, and so gradually making its way into the world : for such was the will of God concerning it, who did not "light a candle to put it under a bushel, but that it might give light to all that were in the house." And this our Lord had declared to his first disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth," "the light of the world;" at the same time that he gave that general command, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 13-16.)

2. And, indeed, supposing a few of these lovers of mankind to see "the whole world lying in wickedness," can we believe they would be unconcerned at the sight, at the misery of those for whom their Lord died? Would not their bowels yearn over them, and their hearts melt away for very trouble? Could they then stand idle all the day long, even were there no command from Him whom they loved? Rather, would they not labour, by all possible means, to pluck some of these brands out of the burning? Undoubtedly they would : they would spare no pains to bring back whomsoever they could of those poor "sheep that had gone astray, to the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." (1 Pet. ii. 25.)

3. So the Christians of old did. They laboured, having opportunity, "to do good unto all men," (Gal. vi. 10,) warning them to flee from the wrath to come; now, now to escape the damnation of hell. They declared, "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now he calleth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts xvii. 30.) They cried aloud, Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; "so iniquity shall not be your ruin." (Ezek. xviii. 30.) They "reasoned" with them of "temperance, and righteousness," or justice,—of the virtues opposite to their reigning sins; "and of judgment to come,"—of the wrath of God which would

surely be executed on evil-doers in that day when he should judge the world. (Acts xxiv. 25.)

4. They endeavoured herein to speak to every man severally as he had need. To the careless, to those who lay unconcerned in darkness and in the shadow of death, they thundered, "Awake, thou that sleepest; arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." But to those who were already awakened out of sleep, and groaning under a sense of the wrath of God, their language was, "We have an Advocate with the Father; he is the propitiation for our sins." Meantime, those who had believed, they provoked to love and to good works; to patient continuance in well-doing; and to abound more and more in that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. (Heb. xii. 14.)

5. And their labour was not in vain in the Lord. His word ran and was glorified. It grew mightily and prevailed. But so much the more did offences prevail also. The world in general were offended, "because they testified of it, that the works thereof were evil." (John vii. 7.) The men of pleasure were offended, not only because these men were made, as it were, to reprove their thoughts; ("He professeth," said they, "to have the knowledge of God; he calleth himself the child of the Lord; his life is not like other men's; his ways are of another fashion; he abstaineth from our ways, as from filthiness; he maketh his boast, that God is his Father," Wis. ii. 13-16;) but much more, because so many of their companions were taken away, and would no more "run with them to the same excess of riot." (1 Pet. iv. 4.) The men of reputation were offended, because, as the gospel spread, they declined in the esteem of the people; and because many no longer dared to give them flattering titles, or to pay man the homage due to God only. The men of trade called one another together, and said, "Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth: but ye see and hear that these men have persuaded and turned away much people: so that this our craft is in danger to be

set at nought." (Acts xix. 25, &c.) Above all, the men of religion, so called, the men of *outside* religion, "the saints of the world," were offended, and ready at every opportunity to cry out "Men of Israel, help! We have found these men pestilent fellows, movers of sedition throughout the world." (Acts xxiv. 5.) "These are the men that teach all men everywhere against the people, and against this place." (Acts xxi. 28.)

6. Thus it was that the heavens grew black with clouds, and the storm gathered amain. For the more Christianity spread, the more hurt was done, in the account of those who received it not; and the number increased of those who were more and more enraged at these men who thus "turned the world upside down;" (Acts xvii. 6;) insomuch that more and more cried out, "Away with such fellows from the earth; it is not fit that they should live;" yea, and sincerely believed, that whosoever should kill them would do God service.

7. Meanwhile they did not fail to cast out their name as evil; (Luke vi. 22;) so that this "sect was everywhere spoken against." (Acts xxviii. 22.) Men said all manner of evil of them, even as had been done of the prophets that were before them. (Matt. v. 12.) And whatsoever any would affirm, others would believe; so that offences grew as the stars of heaven for multitude. And hence arose, at the time fore-ordained of the Father, persecution in all its forms. Some, for a season, suffered only shame and reproach; some, "the spoiling of their goods;" "some had trial of mocking and scourging; some of bonds and imprisonment;" and others "resisted unto blood." (Heb. x. 34; xi. 36, &c.)

8. Now it was that the pillars of hell were shaken, and the kingdom of God spread more and more. Sinners were everywhere "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." He gave his children "such a mouth, and such wisdom, as all their adversaries could not resist;" and their lives were of equal force with their words. But, above all, their suf

ferings spake to all the world. They "approved themselves the servants of God, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours; in perils in the sea, in perils in the wilderness, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. vi. 1, &c.) And when, having fought the good fight, they were led as sheep to the slaughter, and offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith, then the blood of each found a voice, and the heathen owned, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

9. Thus did Christianity spread itself in the earth. But how soon did the tares appear with the wheat, and the *mystery of iniquity* work, as well as the *mystery of godliness!* How soon did Satan find a seat, even in the temple of God, "till the woman fled into the wilderness," and "the faithful were again minished from the children of men!" Here we tread a beaten path: the still increasing corruptions of the succeeding generations have been largely described, from time to time, by those witnesses God raised up, to show that he had "built his church upon a rock, and the gates of hell should not" wholly "prevail against her." (Matt. xvi. 18.)

III. 1. But shall we not see greater things than these? Yea, greater than have been yet from the beginning of the world. Can Satan cause the truth of God to fail, or his promises to be of none effect? If not, the time will come when Christianity will prevail over all, and cover the earth. Let us stand a little, and survey (the third thing which was proposed) this strange sight, a *Christian world*. Of this the prophets of old inquired and searched diligently: (1 Pet. i. 10, 11, &c.): of this the Spirit which was in them testified, "It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation neither shall they learn war any

more." (Isai. ii. 2, 4.) "In that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall set his hand again to recover the remnant of his people; and he shall set up an Ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." (Isa. xi. 10-12.) "The wolf shall then dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy, saith the Lord, in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. xi. 6-9.)

2. To the same effect are the words of the great apostle, which it is evident have never yet been fulfilled. "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. But through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles. And if the diminishing of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery; that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved." (Rom. xi. 1, 11, 12, 25, 26.)

3. Suppose now the fulness of time to be come, and the prophecies to be accomplished. What a prospect is this! All is peace, "quietness, and assurance for ever." Here is no din of arms, no "confused noise," no "garments rolled in blood." "Destructions are come to a perpetual end:" wars are ceased from the earth. Neither are there any intestine jars remaining; no brother rising up against brother; no country or city divided against itself, and tearing out its own bowels. Civil discord is at an end for evermore, and none is left either to destroy or hurt his neighbour. Here is no oppression to "make" even "the wise man mad;" no extortion to "grind the face of the poor;" no robbery or

wrong; no rapine or injustice; for all are "content with such things as they possess." Thus "righteousness and peace have kissed each other;" (Psalm lxxxv. 10 :) they have "taken root and filled the land;" "righteousness flourishing out of the earth;" and "peace looking down from heaven."

4. And with righteousness, or justice, mercy is also found. The earth is no longer full of cruel habitations. The Lord hath destroyed both the blood-thirsty and malicious, the envious and revengeful man. Were there any provocation, there is none that now knoweth to return evil for evil: but indeed there is none that doeth evil, no, not one; for all are harmless as doves. And being filled with peace and joy in believing, and united in one body, by one Spirit, they all love as brethren, they are all of one heart and of one soul. "Neither saith any of them, that aught of the things which he possesseth is his own." There is none among them that lacketh; for every man loveth his neighbour as himself. And all walk by one rule: "Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them."

5. It follows, that no unkind word can ever be heard among them, no strife of tongues, no contention of any kind, no railing or evil-speaking, but every one "opens his mouth with wisdom, and in his tongue there is the law of kindness." Equally incapable are they of fraud or guile: their love is without dissimulation: their words are always the just expression of their thoughts, opening a window into their breast, that whosoever desires may look into their hearts, and see that only love and God are there.

6. Thus, where the Lord Omnipotent taketh to himself his mighty power and reigneth, doth he "subdue all things to himself," cause every heart to overflow with love, and fill every mouth with praise. "Happy are the people that are in such a case; yea, blessed are the people who have the Lord for their God." (Psalm cxliv. 15.) "Arise, shine," saith the Lord; "for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee

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Thou hast known that I the Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty God of Jacob. I have made thy officers peace, and thy exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. Thy people are all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." (Isaiah lx. 1, 16-19, 21.)

IV. Having thus briefly considered Christianity, as beginning, as going on, and as covering the earth; it remains only that I should close the whole with a plain, practical application.

1. And, first, I would ask, where does this Christianity now exist? Where, I pray, do the Christians live? Which is the country, the inhabitants whereof are all thus filled with the Holy Ghost?—are all of one heart and of one soul; cannot suffer one among them to lack any thing, but continually give to every man as he hath need; who, one and all, have the love of God filling their hearts, and constraining them to love their neighbour as themselves; who have all "put on bowels of mercy, humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering;" who offend not in any kind, either by word or deed, against justice, mercy or truth; but in every point do unto all men, as they would these should do unto them? With what propriety can we term any a Christian country, which does not answer this description? Why, then, let us confess we have never yet seen a Christian country upon earth.

2. I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, if ye do account me a madman or a fool, yet, *as a fool bear with me.* It is utterly needful that some one should use great plainness of speech towards you. It is more especially needful at *this* time; for who knoweth but it

is the *last*? Who knoweth how soon the righteous Judge may say, "I will no more be entreated for this people?" "Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in this land, they should but deliver their own souls." And who will use this plainness, if I do not? Therefore I, even I will speak. And I adjure you, by the living God, that ye steel not your breasts against receiving a blessing at my hands. Do not say in your hearts, *Non persuadebis, etiamsi persuaseris*;\* or, in other words, Lord, thou shalt not *send by whom thou wilt send*; let me rather perish in my blood, than be saved by this man!

3. Brethren, "I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak." Let me ask you, then, in tender love, and in the spirit of meekness, Is this city a Christian city? Is Christianity, scriptural Christianity, found here? Are we, considered as a community of men, so "filled with the Holy Ghost," as to enjoy in our hearts, and show forth in our lives, the genuine fruits of that Spirit? Are all the magistrates, all heads and governors of colleges and halls, and their respective societies, (not to speak of the inhabitants of the town,) "of one heart and one soul?" Is "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts?" Are our tempers the same that were in him? And are our lives agreeable thereto? Are we "holy as he who hath called us is holy in all manner of conversation?"

4. I entreat you to observe, that here are no peculiar notions now under consideration; that the question moved is not concerning doubtful opinions of one kind or another, but concerning the undoubted, fundamental branches (if there be any such) of our common Christianity. And for the decision thereof, I appeal to your own conscience, guided by the word of God. He therefore that is not condemned by his own heart, let him go free.

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\* "Your persuasions shall not prevail with us, even though they should really convince us."—EDIT.

5. In the fear, then, and in the presence of the great God, before whom both you and I shall shortly appear, I pray you that are in authority over us, whom I reverence for your office' sake, to consider, (and not after the manner of dissemblers with God,) are you "filled with the Holy Ghost?" Are you lively portraitures of Him whom ye are appointed to represent among men? "I have said, Ye are gods," ye magistrates and rulers; ye are by office so nearly allied to the God of heaven! In your several stations and degrees, ye are to show forth unto us "the Lord our Governor." Are all the thoughts of your hearts, all your tempers and desires, suitable to your high calling? Are all your words like unto those which come out of the mouth of God? Is there in all your actions dignity and love? a greatness which words cannot express, which can flow only from a heart full of God; and yet consistent with the character of "man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm?"

6. Ye venerable men, who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel thence the shades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be wise unto salvation, are you "filled with the Holy Ghost?" with all those "fruits of the Spirit," which your important office so indispensably requires? Is your heart whole with God? full of love and zeal to set up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind those under your care, that the one rational end of all our studies, is to know, love, and serve "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent?" Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that love alone never faileth; (whereas, whether there be tongues, they shall fail; or philosophical knowledge, it shall vanish away;) and that without love, all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit? Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and of all mankind for his sake? Have you an eye to this end in whatever you prescribe, touching the kind, the manner, and the measure of their studies; desiring and labouring that, wherever the lot of these young soldiers of Christ

is cast, they may be so many burning and shining lights, adorning the gospel of Christ in all things? And permit me to ask, Do you put forth all your strength in the vast work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might? exerting every faculty of your soul? using every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your power?

7. Let it not be said, that I speak here, as if all under your care were intended to be clergymen. Not so: I only speak as if they were all intended to be Christians. But what example is set them by us who enjoy the beneficence of our forefathers? by fellows, students, scholars; more especially those who are of some rank and eminence? Do ye, brethren, abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in lowliness of mind, in self-denial and mortification, in seriousness and composure of spirit, in patience, meekness, sobriety, temperance: and in unwearied, restless endeavours to do good in every kind unto all men, to relieve their outward wants, and to bring their souls to the true knowledge and love of God? Is this the general character of fellows of colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, have not pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience and peevishness, sloth and indolence, gluttony and sensuality, and even a proverbial uselessness, been objected to us, perhaps not always by our enemies, nor wholly without ground? O that God would roll away this reproach from us, that the very memory of it might perish for ever!

8. Many of us are more immediately consecrated to God, called to minister in holy things. Are we then patterns to the rest, "in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity?" (1 Tim. iv. 12.) Is there written on our forehead and on our heart, "Holiness to the Lord?" From what motives did we enter upon this office? Was it indeed with a single eye "to serve God, trusting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon us this ministration, for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people?" And have we "clearly determined, by God's grace, to

give ourselves wholly to this office?" Do we forsake and set aside, as much as in us lies, all worldly cares and studies? Do we apply ourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our cares and studies this way? Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others also? Do we know God? Do we know Jesus Christ? Hath "God revealed his Son in us?" And hath he "made us able ministers of the new covenant?" Where then are the "seals of our apostleship?" Who, that were dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened by our word? Have we a burning zeal to save souls from death, so that for their sake we often forget even to eat our bread? Do we speak plain, "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God?" (2 Cor. iv. 2.) Are we dead to the world, and the things of the world, "laying up all our treasure in heaven?" Do we lord over God's heritage? Or are we the least, the servants of all? When we bear the reproach of Christ, does it sit heavy upon us? Or do we rejoice therein? When we are smitten on the one cheek, do we resent it? Are we impatient of affronts? Or do we turn the other also; not resisting the evil, but overcoming evil with good? Have we a bitter zeal, inciting us to strive sharply and passionately with them that are out of the way? Or is our zeal the flame of love, so as to direct all our words with sweetness, lowliness, and meekness of wisdom?

9. Once more: what shall we say concerning the youth of this place? Have you either the form or the power of Christian godliness? Are you humble, teachable, advisable; or stubborn, self-willed, heady, and high-minded? Are you obedient to your superiors as to parents? Or do you despise those to whom you owe the tenderest reverence? Are you diligent in your easy business, pursuing your studies with all your strength? Do you redeem the time, crowding as much work into every day as it can contain? Rather, are ye not conscious to yourselves, that you waste away day

after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Christianity, or in gaming, or in—you know not what? Are you better managers of your fortune than of your time? Do you, out of principle, take care to owe no man any thing? Do you “remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy;” to spend it in the more immediate worship of God? When you are in his house, do you consider that God is there? Do you behave “as seeing him that is invisible?” Do you know how to “possess your bodies in sanctification and honour?” Are not drunkenness and uncleanness found among you? Yea, are there not of you who “glory in their shame?” Do not many of you “take the name of God in vain,” perhaps habitually, without either remorse or fear? Yea, are there not a multitude of you that are forsworn? I fear, a swiftly increasing multitude. Be not surprised, brethren. Before God and this congregation, I own myself to have been of the number, solemnly swearing to observe all those customs, which I then knew nothing of; and those statutes, which I did not so much as read over, either then, or for some years after. What is perjury, if this is not? But if it be, O what a weight of sin, yea, sin of no common dye, lieth upon us! And doth not the Most High regard it?

10. May it not be one of the consequences of this, that so many of you are a generation of triflers; triflers with God, with one another, and with your own souls? For, how few of you spend, from one week to another, a single hour in private prayer! How few have any thought of God in the general tenor of your conversation! Who of you is in any degree acquainted with the work of his Spirit, his supernatural work in the souls of men? Can you hear, unless now and then in a church, any talk of the Holy Ghost? Would you not take it for granted, if one began such a conversation, that it was either hypocrisy or enthusiasm? In the name of the Lord God Almighty, I ask, what religion are you of? Even the talk of Christianity, ye cannot, will not bear

O my brethren ! what a Christian city is this ! "It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand !"

11. For, indeed, what probability, what possibility, rather, (speaking after the manner of men,) is there that Christianity, scriptural Christianity, should be again the religion of this place ; that all orders of men among us should speak and live as men "filled with the Holy Ghost?" By whom should this Christianity be restored? By those of you that are in authority? Are you convinced then that this is scriptural Christianity? Are you desirous it should be restored? And do ye not count your fortune, liberty, life, dear unto yourselves, so ye may be instrumental in the restoring of it? But suppose ye have this desire, who hath any power proportioned to the effect? Perhaps some of you have made a few faint attempts, but with how small success? Shall Christianity then be restored by young, unknown, inconsiderable men? I know not whether ye yourselves could suffer it. Would not some of you cry out, "Young man, in so doing, thou reproachest us?" But there is no danger of your being put to the proof; so hath iniquity overspread us like a flood. Whom then shall God send? the famine, the pestilence, (the last messengers of God to a guilty land,) or the sword, ("the armies of the" Romish "aliens,") to reform us into our first love? Nay, "rather let us fall into thy hand, O Lord, and let us not fall into the hands of man."

Lord, save, or we perish! Take us out of the mire, that we sink not! O help us against these enemies! For vain is the help of man. Unto thee all things are possible. According to the greatness of thy power, preserve thou those that are appointed to die; and preserve us in the manner that seemeth to thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt!

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### *QUESTIONS ON SERMON IV.*

- Ques. 1. (1.) What is said about the day of Pentecost?
- Ques. 2. (2.) Were these ordinary or extraordinary gifts?
- Ques. 3. (3.) Were all believers endowed with extraordinary gifts?
- Ques. 4. (3.) What is said of the continuance of the gifts of miracles and healing in the Church?
- Ques. 5. (4.) What is essential to all Christians in all ages?
- Ques. 6. (5.) Is Christianity a set of opinions, or holiness of heart and life?
- Ques. 7. (I. 1.) What is said of the individual life?
- Ques. 8. (I. 2.) What is the essence of this faith?
- Ques. 9. (I. 3.) What are the subjects of his rejoicing?
- Ques. 10. (I. 4.) Does this filial love increase?
- Ques. 11. (I. 5.) What love is caused by this love of God?
- Ques. 12. (I. 6.) What is said of humility, temperance, self-denial?
- Ques. 13. (I. 7.) How does it influence his conduct toward his neighbor?
- Ques. 14. (I. 8.) How does it influence his attendance upon the means of grace?
- Ques. 15. (I. 9.) Does it produce good works?
- Ques. 16. (I. 10.) What is said of Christianity in its rise?
- Ques. 17. (II. 1.) What is next considered?
- Ques. 18. (II. 2.) Is sympathy for others produced in believers?
- Ques. 19. (II. 3.) What is said of the Christians of old?
- Ques. 20. (II. 4.) How did they manifest their love for the souls of men?
- Ques. 21. (II. 5.) What was the result?

Ques. 22. (II. 6.) What effect was produced among unbelievers?

Ques. 23. (II. 7.) How did the early Christians suffer?

Ques. 24. (II. 8.) Did these things check the gospel?

Ques. 25. (II. 9.) What is said of the "mystery of iniquity?"

Ques. 26. (III. 1.) Will Christianity prevail everywhere?

Ques. 27. (III. 2.) What does the apostle say?

Ques. 28. (III. 3.) What picture does the preacher draw?

Ques. 29. (III. 4.) What is the result in temporal things?

Ques. 30. (III. 5.) What effect is produced in society?

Ques. 31. (III. 6.) What is the state of such a people?

Ques. 32. (IV. 1.) What inquiry is here made?

Ques. 33. (IV. 2.) What does he mean by the "last" time? Did he have some conception of the resentment of the University authorities for his plainness of speech?

Ques. 34. (IV. 3.) What questions does he ask? Are these inquiries stated in offensive language?

Ques. 35. (IV. 4.) To whom does he appeal?

Ques. 36. (IV. 5.) Are not these personal appeals in good taste, and kindly expressed?

Ques. 37. (IV. 6.) How does he address the authorities?!

Ques. 38. (IV. 7.) Is he speaking only of those intended to be clergymen?

Ques. 39. (IV. 8.) How does he address the ministers?

Ques. 40. (IV. 9.) How does he speak of the youth?

Ques. 41. (IV. 9.) What does he call many of them?

Ques. 42. (IV. 9.) What does he mean by committing perjury? *Ans.* That they took solemn oaths to obey the rules and statutes, and did not obey them. This strong language called their attention to a great offense, but it does not deserve to be called *perjury* in our sense of the term. What, then, is perjury? It is willfully swearing to what we know to be false. Mr. Wesley was as severe a critic of himself as of others.

Ques. 43. (IV. 10.) What does he call the youth? What conversation do they avoid?

Ques. 44. (IV. 11.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON V.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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IN this and the seven sermons following Mr. Wesley expounds the evangelical doctrines which form the basis of Methodist teaching. Justification by faith he presents in two aspects: 1. It is an act of God's pardoning grace, conditioned on faith. 2. It is a gift of righteousness or rightness of relation to God received by us through faith. The next sermon (VI.) defines the antecedent steps to the attainment of this gracious state. In Sermon VII. we have these principles in their subjective character in personal experiences. Sermons VIII. and IX. are devoted to the fruits of the regenerating Spirit, or spirit of adoption which accompanies the act of faith, or trust. Sermons X., XI., and XII. contain the doctrine of the twofold assurance, or witness of this state of grace.

Mr. Wesley regarded the circle of doctrines presented in these eight sermons as "*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesie*: The Christian Church stands or falls with it." In 1739 he published a work on "Justification by Faith," written by Dr. Barnes, and in 1743 his "Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" contained a clear exposition of the doctrine. In these sermons, printed in 1747, he was simply defining the doctrines and teaching the same fundamental truths which his own experience had confirmed for nine years. They were not mere dogmas, to be accepted without influence on the life, or rejected without injury to the soul. They were essential truths, and upon their acceptance depended the rise and growth of religion in the soul.

On the 25th of June, 1744, Mr. Wesley held his first Conference. There were present the two Wesleys, and four other clergymen, and four lay preachers—ten persons in all. The first work of this Conference was the consideration of this doctrine, and the following important propositions were agreed upon:

“1. To be justified is to be pardoned and received into God’s favor.

“2. Faith is the condition of justification.

“3. Repentance and works meet for repentance must go before this faith.

“4. Faith is a divine, supernatural evidence or conviction of things not seen; it is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God. First a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost. ‘Christ loved me and gave himself for me.’ This is that *faith* by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, ‘Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood.’ And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in the heart.

“5. No man who hears the gospel can go to heaven without this faith, whatever a heathen may do.”

At the Conference of 1745 these positions were carefully reviewed and guarded as follows:

“Q. Is a sense of God’s pardoning love indispensably necessary to final salvation—suppose in a Papist or Quaker, or, in general, among those who never heard it preached?

“A. Love hopeth all things. We know not how far any of these may fall under the case of invincible ignorance.

“Q. Have we duly considered the case of Cornelius? Was not he in the favor of God when ‘his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God?’—that is, before he believed in Christ?

“A. It does seem that he was in some degree, but we speak not of those who have not heard the gospel.

“Q. But were not those works of his ‘splendid sins?’

"A. No; nor were they done without the grace of Christ.

"Q. How, then, can we maintain that all works done before we have a sense of the pardoning love of God are sins, and, as such, are an abomination to him?

"A. The works of him who has heard the gospel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath 'willed and commanded them to be done.' And yet we know not how to say that they are an abomination to the Lord in him who feareth God, and from that principle does the best he can."

The Romanist teaching on the subject of justification was prevalent in many quarters at this time. According to this doctrine of the Council of Trent, *sanctification* preceded *justification*, and good works necessarily formed the basis of the inherent righteousness which in the Roman Catholic system was only another phrase for justification. The doctrine of *penance* formed a species of personal atonement, whereby the sinner actually assumed the office and work of Christ, suffering the penalty of his sins, and thus, having exhausted the justice of God in personal punishment, the sinner became a righteous man. To counteract this and other errors, Mr. Wesley defines his doctrine, which is that of the Church of England, as follows:

"1. That no good work, properly so called, can go before justification.

"2. That no degree of true sanctification can be previous to it.

"3. That as the meritorious cause of justification is the life and death of Christ, so the condition of it is faith—faith alone.

"4. That both inward and outward holiness are consequent on this faith, and are the ordinary, stated condition of final justification."

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON V.

How may a sinner be justified before God? Importance of the question, and confused notions regarding it.

1. Ground of the doctrine of justification. Man created in God's image. Placed under a perfect law—a law of love and of positive command. Man violated this law. The consequences of this sin to Adam, to his posterity. The gift of God's Son, and his atoning work. God's offer of pardon through him to the whole world.

2. Justification defined.

Not the being made actually just or righteous. Not a clearing from accusation of Satan, or of the law. Does not imply that God is deceived when he justifies. The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "sheweth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of sins that are past." Justification in Scripture is sometimes referred to the day of judgment, but more frequently is that which takes place at the *beginning* of the Christian life.

3. Who are they that are justified?

The ungodly. Hence not they who are sanctified. But the lost, the sick, the condemned. Good works, in the highest sense of the term, do not precede but follow after justification.

4. The terms of justification.

Faith alone. Scripture proof of this. This faith defined as not only a divine evidence or conviction that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. This faith is the doctrine of the Church of England. This is the necessary condition. The moment this faith is received it is "counted for righteousness."

The reason of this condition with God. But it hides pride from man. Exhortation to the ungodly to believe.

## SERMON V.

## JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

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*'To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.'*—ROM. iv. 5.

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1. How a sinner may be justified before God, the Lord and Judge of all, is a question of no common importance to every child of man. It contains the foundation of all our hope, inasmuch as while we are at enmity with God, there can be no true peace, no solid joy, either in time or in eternity. What peace can there be, while our own heart condemns us; and much more, He that is "greater than our heart, and knoweth all things?" What solid joy, either in this world or that to come, while "the wrath of God abideth on us?"

2. And yet how little hath this important question been understood! What confused notions have many had concerning it! Indeed, not only confused, but often utterly false; contrary to the truth, as light to darkness; notions absolutely inconsistent with the oracles of God, and with the whole analogy of faith. And hence, erring concerning the very foundation, they could not possibly build thereon; at least, not "gold, silver, or precious stones," which would endure when tried as by fire; but only "hay and stubble," neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to man.

3. In order to do justice, as far as in me lies, to the vast importance of the subject, to save those that seek the truth in sincerity from "vain jangling and strife of words," to clear the confusedness of thought into which so many have already been led thereby, and to give them

true and just conceptions of this great mystery of godliness, I shall endeavour to show, .

First, What is the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification ;

Secondly, What justification is ;

Thirdly, Who they are that are justified ; and,

Fourthly, On what terms they are justified.

I. I am first to show what is the general ground of this whole doctrine of justification.

1. In the image of God was man made ; holy as He that created him is holy ; merciful as the Author of all is merciful ; perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. As God is love, so man, dwelling in love, dwelt in God, and God in him. God made him to be an "image of his own eternity," an incorruptible picture of the God of glory. He was accordingly pure, as God is pure, from every spot of sin. He knew not evil in any kind or degree, but was inwardly and outwardly sinless and undefiled. "He loved the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength."

2. To man, thus upright and perfect, God gave a perfect law, to which he required full and perfect obedience. He required full obedience in every point, and this to be performed without any intermission, from the moment man became a living soul, till the time of his trial should be ended. No allowance was made for any falling short. As, indeed, there was no need of any ; man being altogether equal to the task assigned, and thoroughly furnished for every good word and work.

3. To the entire law of love which was written in his heart, (against which, perhaps, he could not sin directly,) it seemed good to the sovereign wisdom of God to superadd one positive law : "Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of the tree that groweth in the midst of the garden ;" annexing that penalty thereto, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

4. Such then was the state of man in paradise. By the free, unmerited love of God he was holy and happy, he knew, loved, enjoyed God, which is, in substance

life everlasting. And in this life of love he was to continue for ever, if he continued to obey God in all things; but if he disobeyed him in any, he was to forfeit all. "In that day," said God, "thou shalt surely die."

5. Man did disobey God. He "ate of the tree, of which God commanded him, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it." And in that day he was condemned by the righteous judgment of God. Then also, the sentence, whereof he was warned before, began to take place upon him. For the moment he tasted that fruit, he died. His soul died, was separated from God; separate from whom the soul has no more life than the body has when separate from the soul. His body, likewise, became corruptible and mortal; so that death then took hold on this also. And, being already dead in spirit, dead to God, dead in sin, he hastened on to death everlasting; to the destruction both of body and soul, in the fire never to be quenched.

6. Thus "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. And so death passed upon all men," as being contained in him who was the common father and representative of us all. Thus, "through the offence of one," all are dead, dead to God, dead in sin, dwelling in a corruptible, mortal body, shortly to be dissolved, and under the sentence of death eternal. For as "by one man's disobedience" all "were made sinners;" so, by that offence of one "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." (Rom. v. 12, &c.)

7. In this state we were, even all mankind, when "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life." In the fulness of time he was made man, another common Head of mankind, a second general parent and representative of the whole human race. And as such it was that "he bore our griefs," "the Lord laying upon him the iniquities of us all." Then was he "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "He made his soul an offering for sin:" he poured out his blood for the transgressors: b

bare "our sins in his own body on the tree," that by his stripes we might be healed: and by that one oblation of himself, once offered, he hath redeemed me and all mankind; having thereby "made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world."

8. In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath "tasted death for every man," God hath now "reconciled the world to himself, not imputing to them their" former "trespasses." And thus, "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification." So that, for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.

9. This, therefore, is the general ground of the whole doctrine of justification. By the sin of the first Adam, who was not only the father, but likewise the representative, of us all, we all fell short of the favour of God; we all became children of wrath; or, as the apostle expresses it, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation." Even so, by the sacrifice for sin made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, God is so far reconciled to all the world, that he hath given them a new covenant; the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, "there is no more condemnation" for us, but "we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ."

II. 1. But what is it to be *justified*? What is *justification*? This was the second thing which I proposed to show. And it is evident, from what has been already observed, that it is not the being made actually just and righteous. This is *sanctification*; which is, indeed, in some degree, the immediate fruit of justification, but, nevertheless, is a distinct gift of God, and of a totally

different nature. The one implies, what God does for us through his Son; the other, what he works in us by his Spirit. So that, although some rare instances may be found wherein the term *justified* or *justification* is used in so wide a sense as to include *sanctification* also; yet, in general use, they are sufficiently distinguished from each other, both by St. Paul and the other inspired writers.

2. Neither is that far-fetched conceit, that justification is the clearing us from accusation, particularly that of Satan, easily provable from any clear text of holy writ. In the whole scriptural account of this matter, as above laid down, neither that accuser nor his accusation appears to be at all taken in. It cannot indeed be denied, that he is the "accuser" of men, emphatically so called. But it does in nowise appear, that the great apostle hath any reference to this, more or less, in all that he hath written touching justification, either to the Romans or the Galatians.

3. It is also far easier to take for granted, than to prove from any clear scripture testimony, that justification is the clearing us from the accusation brought against us by the law: at least, if this forced, unnatural way of speaking mean either more or less than this, that whereas we have transgressed the law of God, and thereby deserved the damnation of hell, God does not inflict on those who are justified the punishment which they had deserved.

4. Least of all does justification imply, that God is deceived in those whom he justifies; that he thinks them to be what, in fact, they are not; that he accounts them to be otherwise than they are. It does by no means imply, that God judges concerning us contrary to the real nature of things; that he esteems us better than we really are, or believes us righteous when we are unrighteous. Surely no. The judgment of the all-wise God is always according to truth. Neither can it ever consist with his unerring wisdom, to think that I am innocent, to judge that I am righteous or holy, because

another is so. He can no more, in this manner, compare me with Christ, than with David or Abraham. Let any man, to whom God hath given understanding, weigh this without prejudice; and he cannot but perceive, that such a notion of justification is neither reconcilable to reason nor Scripture.

5. The plain scriptural notion of justification is pardon, the forgiveness of sins. It is that act of God the Father, whereby, for the sake of the propitiation made by the blood of his Son, he "showeth forth his righteousness (or mercy) by the remission of the sins that are past." This is the easy, natural account of it given by St. Paul, throughout this whole epistle. So he explains it himself, more particularly in this and in the following chapter. Thus, in the next verses but one to the text, "Blessed are they," saith he, "whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." To him that is justified or forgiven, God "will not impute sin" to his condemnation. He will not condemn him on that account, either in this world or in that which is to come. His sins, all his past sins, in thought, word, and deed, are covered, are blotted out, shall not be remembered or mentioned against him, any more than if they had not been. God will not inflict on that sinner what he deserved to suffer, because the Son of his love hath suffered for him. And from the time we are "accepted through the Beloved," "reconciled to God through his blood," he loves, and blesses, and watches over us for good, even as if we had never sinned.

Indeed the apostle in one place seems to extend the meaning of the word much farther, where he says, "Not the hearers of the law, but the doers of the law, shall be justified." Here he appears to refer our justification to the sentence of the great day. And so our Lord himself unquestionably doth, when he says, "By thy words thou shalt be justified;" proving thereby, that "for every idle word men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment:" but perhaps we can

hardly produce another instance of St. Paul's using the word in that distant sense. In the general tenor of his writings, it is evident he doth not; and least of all in the text before us, which undeniably speaks, not of those who have already "finished their course," but of those who are now *just setting out*, just beginning to "run the race which is set before them."

III. 1. But this is the third thing which was to be considered, namely, Who are they that are justified? And the apostle tells us expressly, the ungodly: "He" (that is, God) "justifieth the ungodly;" the ungodly of every kind and degree; and none but the ungodly. As "they that are righteous need no repentance," so they need no forgiveness. It is only sinners that have any occasion for pardon; it is sin alone which admits of being forgiven. Forgiveness, therefore, has an immediate reference to sin, and, in this respect, to nothing else. It is our *unrighteousness* to which the pardoning God is *merciful*: it is our *iniquity* which he "remembereth no more."

2. This seems not to be at all considered by those who so vehemently contend that a man must be sanctified, that is, holy, before he can be justified; especially by such of them as affirm, that universal holiness or obedience must precede justification. (Unless they mean that justification at the last day, which is wholly out of the present question.) So far from it, that the very supposition is not only flatly impossible, (for where there is no love of God, there is no holiness, and there is no love of God but from a sense of his loving us,) but also grossly, intrinsically absurd, contradictory to itself. For it is not a saint but a sinner that is forgiven, and under the notion of a sinner. God justifieth not the godly, but the ungodly; not those that are holy already, but the unholy. Upon what condition he doeth this, will be considered quickly: but whatever it is, it cannot be holiness. To assert this, is to say the Lamb of God takes away only those sins which were taken away before.

3. Does then the good Shepherd seek and save only

those that are found already? No. He seeks and saves that which is lost. He pardons those who need his pardoning mercy. He saves from the guilt of sin (and, at the same time, from the power) sinners of every kind, of every degree; men who till then were altogether ungodly; in whom the love of the Father was not; and, consequently, in whom dwelt no good thing, no good or truly Christian temper; but all such as were evil and abominable, pride, anger, love of the world, the genuine fruits of that *carnal mind* which is "enmity against God."

4. These who are sick, the burden of whose sins is intolerable, are they that need a physician; these who are guilty, who groan under the wrath of God, are they that need a pardon. These who are *condemned already*, not only by God, but also by their own conscience, as by a thousand witnesses, of all their ungodliness, both in thought, and word, and work, cry aloud for him that "justifieth the ungodly," through the redemption that is in Jesus;—the ungodly, and "him that worketh not;" that worketh not, before he is justified, any thing that is good, that is truly virtuous or holy, but only evil continually. For his heart is necessarily, essentially evil, till the love of God is shed abroad therein. And while the tree is corrupt, so are the fruits; "for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit."

5. If it be objected, "Nay, but a man, before he is justified, may feed the hungry, or clothe the naked; and these are good works;" the answer is easy: He may do these, even before he is justified; and these are, in one sense, "good works,"—they are "good and profitable to men." But it does not follow, that they are, strictly speaking, good in themselves, or good in the sight of God. All truly *good works* (to use the words of our Church) *follow after justification*; and they are therefore good and "acceptable to God in Christ," because they "spring out of a true and living faith." By a parity of reason, all *works done before justification are not good*, in the Christian sense, *forasmuch as they spring not of*

*faith in Jesus Christ*; (though from some kind of faith in God they may spring;) "yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not" (how strange soever it may appear to some) "but they have the nature of sin."

6. Perhaps those who doubt of this have not duly considered the weighty reason which is here assigned, why no works done before justification can be truly and properly good. The argument plainly runs thus:—

No works are good, which are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

But no works done before justification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done:

Therefore, no works done before justification are good

The first proposition is self-evident; and the second—that no works done before justification are done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done—will appear equally plain and undeniable, if we only consider. God hath willed and commanded, that *all our works should be done in charity*, (*εἰ ἀγαπῆ*), in love, in that love to God which produces love to all mankind. But none of our works can be done in this love, while the love of the Father (of God as our Father) is not in us; and this love cannot be in us till we receive the "Spirit of adoption, crying in our hearts, Abba, Father." If, therefore, God doth not *justify the ungodly*, and him that (in this sense) *worketh not*, then hath Christ died in vain; then, notwithstanding his death, can no flesh living be justified.

IV. 1. But on what terms then is he justified, who is altogether *ungodly*, and till that time *worketh not*? On one alone; which is faith: he "believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly." And "he that believeth is not condemned;" yea, he is "passed from death unto life." "For the righteousness (or mercy) of God is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe:—whom God hath set forth for a propitiation through faith in his blood; that he might be just, and" (consistently with his justice) "the Justifier of him which

believeth in Jesus:" "therefore, we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law;" without previous obedience to the moral law, which, indeed, he could not, till now, perform. That it is the moral law, and that alone, which is here intended, appears evidently from the words that follow:—"Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law." What law do we establish by faith? Not the ritual law: not the ceremonial law of Moses. In nowise; but the great, unchangeable law of love, the holy love of God, and of our neighbour.

2. Faith in general is a divine, supernatural *ελεγχος*, evidence or conviction, "of things not seen," not discoverable by our bodily senses, as being either past, future, or spiritual. Justifying faith implies, not only a divine evidence or conviction that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;" but a sure trust and confidence that Christ died for *my* sins, that he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*. And at what time soever a sinner thus believes, be it in early childhood, in the strength of his years, or when he is old and hoary-headed, God justifieth that ungodly one: God, for the sake of his Son, pardoneth and absolveth him who had in him, till then, no good thing. Repentance, indeed, God had given him before; but that repentance was neither more nor less than a deep sense of the want of all good, and the presence of all evil. And whatever good he hath, or doeth, from that hour, when he first believes in God through Christ, faith does not *find*, but *bring*. This is the fruit of faith. First the tree is good, and then the fruit is good also.

3. I cannot describe the nature of this faith better than in the words of our own Church: "The only instrument of salvation" (whereof justification is one branch) "is faith; that is, a sure trust and confidence that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favour, for the merits of Christ's death and passion. But here we must take heed that we do not halt with God, through an incor-

stant, wavering faith : Peter, coming to Christ upon the water, because he fainted in faith, was in danger of drowning ; so we, if we begin to waver or doubt, it is to be feared that we shall sink as Peter did, not into the water, but into the bottomless pit of hell-fire."—*Second Sermon on the Passion.*

"Therefore, have a sure and constant faith, not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that he hath made a full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect clearing of thy sins, so that thou mayest say, with the apostle, he loved thee, and gave himself for thee. For this is to make Christ thine own, and to apply his merits unto thyself."—*Sermon on the Sacrament, First Part.*

4. By affirming that this faith is the term or condition of justification, I mean, first, that there is no justification without it. "He that believeth not is condemned already;" and so long as he believeth not, that condemnation cannot be removed, but "the wrath of God abideth on him." As "there is no other name given under heaven," than that of Jesus of Nazareth, no other merit whereby a condemned sinner can ever be saved from the guilt of sin ; so there is no other way of obtaining a share in his merit, than *by faith in his name.* So that as long as we are without this faith, we are "strangers to the covenant of promise," we are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and without God in the world." Whatsoever virtues (so called) a man may have,—I speak of those unto whom the gospel is preached ; for "what have I to do to judge them that are without?"—whatsoever good works (so accounted) he may do, it profiteth not ; he is still a *child of wrath*, still under the curse, till he believes in Jesus.

5. Faith, therefore, is the *necessary* condition of justification ; yea, and the *only necessary* condition thereof. This is the second point carefully to be observed ; that, the very moment God giveth faith (for *it is the gift of God*) to the "ungodly" that "worketh not," that "faith is counted to him for righteousness." He hath no right

cousness at all, antecedent to this ; not so much as negative righteousness, or innocence. But "faith is imputed to him for righteousness" the very moment that he believeth. Not that God (as was observed before) thinketh him to be what he is not. But as "he made Christ to be sin for us," that is, treated him as a sinner, punishing him for our sins ; so he counteth us righteous, from the time we believe in him : that is, he doth not punish us for our sins ; yea, treats us as though we were guiltless and righteous.

6. Surely the difficulty of assenting to this proposition—that faith is the *only condition* of justification—must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby thus much, that it is the only thing without which none is justified ; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As, on the one hand, though a man should have every thing else without faith, yet he cannot be justified ; so, on the other, though he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he hath faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak, or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell-fire ; suppose, I say, this sinner, helpless and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ, (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God,) who can doubt but he is forgiven in that moment ? Who will affirm that any more is *indispensably required*, before that sinner can be justified ?

Now, if there ever was one such instance from the beginning of the world, (and have there not been, and are there not, ten thousand times ten thousand ?) it plainly follows, that faith is, in the above sense, the sole condition of justification.

7. It does not become poor, guilty, sinful worms, who receive whatsoever blessings they enjoy, (from the least drop of water that cools our tongue, to the immense riches of glory in eternity,) of grace, of mere favour, and not of debt, to ask of God the reasons of his conduct

It is not meet for us to call Him in question, "who giveth an account to none of his ways;" to demand, Why didst thou make faith the condition, the only condition of justification? Wherefore didst thou decree, *He that believeth*, and he only, *shall be saved*? This is the very point on which St. Paul so strongly insists in the ninth chapter of this epistle; viz. that the terms of pardon and acceptance must depend, not on us, but on *him that calleth us*; that there is no *unrighteousness with God*, in fixing his own terms, not according to ours, but his own good pleasure; who may justly say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy," namely, on him who believeth in Jesus. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth," to choose the condition on which he shall find acceptance; "but of God that showeth mercy;" that accepteth none at all, but of his own free love, his unmerited goodness. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy," viz. on those who believe on the Son of his love; "and whom he will," that is, those who believe not, "he hardeneth," leaves at last to the hardness of their hearts.

8. One reason, however, we may humbly conceive, of God's fixing this condition of justification, "If thou believest in the Lord Jesus Christ, thou shalt be saved," was to *hide pride from man*. Pride had already destroyed the very angels of God; had cast down "a third part of the stars of heaven." It was likewise in great measure owing to this, when the tempter said, "Ye shall be as gods," that Adam fell from his own steadfastness, and brought sin and death into the world. It was therefore an instance of wisdom worthy of God, to appoint such a condition of reconciliation for him and all his posterity, as might effectually humble, might abase them to the dust. And such is faith. It is peculiarly fitted for this end: for he that cometh unto God by this faith, must fix his eye singly on his own wickedness, on his guilt and helplessness, without having the least regard to any supposed good in himself, to any virtue or righteousness whatsoever. He must come as a *mere sinner*

inwardly and outwardly, self-destroyed and self-condemned, bringing nothing to God but ungodliness only, pleading nothing of his own but sin and misery. Thus it is, and thus alone, when his *mouth is stopped*, and he stands utterly *guilty before* God, that he can *look unto Jesus*, as the whole and sole *propitiation for his sins*. Thus only can he be *found in him*, and receive the "righteousness which is of God by faith."

9. Thou ungodly one, who hearest or readest these words! thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner! I charge thee before God, the Judge of all, go straight unto him, with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thy own soul by pleading thy righteousness, more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and thou shalt then find favour in his sight, and know that he justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the *blood of sprinkling*, as an undone, helpless, damned sinner. Thus *look unto Jesus!* There is *the Lamb of God* who *taketh away thy sins!* Plead thou no works, no righteousness of thine own! no humility, contrition, sincerity! In nowise. That were, in very deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No: plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful soul. Who art thou, that now seest and feelest both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord! I challenge *thee* for a child of God by faith! The Lord hath need of thee. Thou who feelest thou art just fit for hell, art just fit to advance his glory; the glory of his free grace, justifying the ungodly and him that worketh not. Oh, come quickly! believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou, even thou, art reconciled to God

### QUESTIONS ON SERMON V.

- Ques. 1. (§ 1.) To whom is the question here propounded important?
- Ques. 2. (§ 2.) Has it been clearly understood?
- Ques. 3. (§ 3.) How is the discourse divided?
- Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What was the state of the first man?
- Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What was the law given to him?
- Ques. 6. (I. 3.) What was prohibited?
- Ques. 7. (I. 4.) What was the state of Adam under this law?
- Ques. 8. (I. 5.) How did he violate it?
- Ques. 9. (I. 6.) What was the result?
- Ques. 10. (I. 7.) What did God do for the lost world?
- Ques. 11. (I. 8.) What was the work of Christ?
- Ques. 12. (I. 9.) What is the ground of the doctrine of justification?
- Ques. 13. (II. 1.) What is it to be justified?
- Ques. 14. (II. 2.) Is man cleared from accusation? What does he call this theory?
- Ques. 15. (II. 3.) Does justification clear us from the law?
- Ques. 16. (II. 4.) What is least of all implied in justification?
- Ques. 17. (II. 5.) What is the plain scriptural notion?
- Ques. 18. (III. 1.) Who are the justified?
- Ques. 19. (III. 2.) Does sanctification precede justification?
- Ques. 20. (III. 3.) Whom does the Good Shepherd seek?
- Ques. 21. (III. 4.) Who are they that need a physician?
- Ques. 22. (III. 5.) What answer is made to the objection?
- Ques. 23. (III. 6.) What syllogism does he give?

Ques. 24. (IV. 1.) What are the terms of this justification?

Ques. 25. (IV. 2.) How is this faith defined?

Ques. 26. (IV. 3.) What quotation does he make from the "Homilies of the Church of England?" What are these "Homilies?" *Ans.* Sermons written by Cranmer and others in the days of King Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth, and appointed by royal authority to be read in the churches.

Ques. 27. Why were these sermons appointed to be read in the churches? *Ans.* On account of the scarcity of persons competent to preach, and in order to establish uniformity of doctrinal teaching in the Church of England.

Ques. 28. (IV. 4.) What is meant by faith is "the term, or condition, of justification?"

Ques. 29. (IV. 5.) How does he emphasize its importance?

Ques. 30. (IV. 6.) How does the difficulty of assenting to this proposition arise?

Ques. 31. (IV. 7.) How does he defend the divine wisdom in the appointment of this means?

Ques. 32. (IV. 8.) What reason may be given for its appointment?

Ques. 33. Are not the way of salvation and the terms, or condition, by which it is obtained solely matters of divine revelation?

Ques. 34. (IV. 9.) How is the sermon concluded?

SERMON VI.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THIS sermon is complementary to the preceding. It brings to view the teaching which, in the language of Mr. Wesley, was "within a hair-breadth of Calvinism." It is *not* Calvinism, however, and it is important that the line of distinction should be clearly drawn. In order to show where in Mr. Wesley and the Calvinists did agree, the following conversation will serve a good purpose. The celebrated Charles Simeon, a minister of the "Evangelical School" in the Church of England, met Mr. Wesley in 1787. Mr. Simeon was in his twenty-eighth year, and Mr. Wesley in his eighty-fourth.

"Sir," said young Simeon, "I understand you are called an Arminian. Now I am sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore, I suppose, we are to draw daggers. But, before I begin to combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God if God had not put it into your heart?"

"Yes," said the veteran, "I do indeed."

"And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by any thing that you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?"

"Yes, solely through Christ."

"But, sir, suppose you were *first* saved by Christ, are you

not somehow or other to save yourself afterward by your good works?"

"No; I must be saved by Christ from first to last."

"Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?"

"No."

"What, then? Are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?"

"Yes, altogether."

"And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?"

"Yes, I have no hope but in him."

"Then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again, for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification, my final perseverance. It is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and, therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in these things wherein we agree."

This is excellent, if we can overlook the seeming egotism which prompted a youth of twenty-eight to catechise a man of eighty-four after this sort. But the view here given is important. It shows that Mr. Simeon knew little or nothing of the writings of Arminius, for every thing which is here called Calvinism is taught in the writings of Arminius, and taught more distinctly and more consistently than in the works of Calvin. Wherein, then, existed the difference in the two systems? In this chiefly: that whereas the *enabling* or *preventing* grace which enabled Mr. Wesley to believe and see himself a sinner given to all men who hear the gospel, according to Arminius, but only to the elect, according to Calvin. So that, according to Arminius, while some believe, others do not, and the salvation of believers is hence of grace only, whilst the exclusion of the impenitent is due solely to unbelief. According to the Arminian system, God is glorified

by the salvation of those that believe, and only the sinner can be blamed for his refusal to believe. On the other hand, Calvinism makes the election of the few, and the rejection of the many, solely the work of God.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON VI.

This text does not contrast the covenant given by Moses with the covenant of grace by Christ. Christ's covenant of grace covers all ages since the fall. But the Jews, ignorant of the gracious character of the Mosaic covenant, went about to establish a legal righteousness of their own. Legal righteousness was given, not to Moses, but to Adam. So now many men refuse to submit to the righteousness of faith, and are seeking a legal righteousness.

##### I. The contrast of the two righteousnesses.

That of the law demands obedience, universal, perfect, uninterrupted. That of faith is given, not to man in innocence, but to fallen man, and demands not unswerving obedience, or any other impossibility. It does not command us to *do*, but to *believe*.

The one finds man holy and in God's favor, and prescribes —what is now far off from man—universal, perfect, uninterrupted obedience as the condition of continuance in God's favor. The other finds man fallen under God's wrath, and prescribes faith as the condition of recovery of God's favor.

##### II. The application.

1. The folly of those seeking legal righteousness. They begin wrong, for they are not now innocent. They undertake what they are not able to perform—perfect obedience. They presume to meet God, not as a God of mercy, but of rigid justice.

2. The wisdom of those who seek the righteousness of faith. They acknowledge their true condition, both past, present, and future, and they humbly and thankfully come to God in God's way of mercy.

##### III. The Exhortation.

Say not, "I must first *do* this, conquer sin, use means;" nor, "I am not good enough, contrite enough, or sufficiently sensible of sin;" nor yet, "I must do something, or be more sincere;" but, "at this present moment, in thy present state, just as thou art," believe thou the gospel.

## SERMON VI.

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH.

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- “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.  
 “But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above :)  
 “Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.)  
 “But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.”—  
 ROMANS X. 5-8.
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1. THE apostle does not here oppose the covenant given by Moses, to the covenant given by Christ. If we ever imagined this, it was for want of observing, that the latter as well as the former part of these words were spoken by Moses himself to the people of Israel, and that concerning the covenant which then was. (Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 14.) But it is the covenant of grace, which God, through Christ, hath established with men in all ages, (as well before and under the Jewish dispensation as since God was manifest in the flesh,) which St. Paul here opposes to the covenant of works, made with Adam while in paradise, but commonly supposed to be the only covenant which God had made with man, particularly by those Jews of whom the apostle writes.

2. Of these it was that he so affectionately speaks in the beginning of this chapter: “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. For they being igno-

rant of God's righteousness," (of the justification that flows from his merc grace and mercy, freely forgiving our sins through the Son of his love, through the redemption which is in Jesus,) "and seeking to establish their own righteousness," (their own holiness, antecedent to faith in "him that justifieth the ungodly," as the ground of their pardon and acceptance,) "have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," and consequently seek death in the error of their life.

3. They were ignorant that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;"—that by the oblation of himself once offered, he had put an end to the first law or covenant, (which, indeed, was not given by God to Moses, but to Adam in his state of innocence,) the strict tenor whereof, without any abatement, was, "Do this, and live;" and, at the same time, purchased for us that better covenant, "Believe, and live;" believe, and thou shalt be saved; now saved, both from the guilt and power of sin, and, of consequence, from the wages of it.

4. And how many are equally ignorant now, even among those who are called by the name of Christ! How many who have now a "zeal for God," yet have it not "according to knowledge;" but are still seeking "to establish their own righteousness," as the ground of their pardon and acceptance; and therefore vehemently refuse to "submit themselves unto the righteousness of God!" Surely my heart's desire, and prayer to God for you, brethren, is, that ye may be saved. And, in order to remove this grand stumbling-block out of your way, I will endeavour to show, first, what the righteousness is which is of the law; and what "the righteousness which is of faith;" secondly, the folly of trusting in the righteousness of the law, and the wisdom of submitting to that which is of faith.

I. 1. And, first, "the righteousness which is of the law saith, The man which doeth these things shall live by them." Constantly and perfectly observe all these things to do them, and then thou shalt live for ever

This law or covenant, (usually called the covenant of works,) given by God to man in Paradise, required an obedience perfect in all its parts, entire and wanting nothing, as the condition of his eternal continuance in the holiness and happiness wherein he was created.

2. It required that man should fulfil all righteousness, inward and outward, negative and positive: that he should not only abstain from every idle word, and avoid every evil work, but should keep every affection, every desire, every thought, in obedience to the will of God: that he should continue holy, as He which had created him was holy, both in heart, and in all manner of conversation: that he should be pure in heart even as God is pure; perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect: that he should love the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength; that he should love every soul which God had made, even as God had loved him: that by this universal benevolence, he should dwell in God, (who is love,) and God in him: that he should serve the Lord his God with all his strength, and in all things singly aim at his glory.

3. These were the things which the righteousness of the law required, that he who did them might live thereby. But it further required, that this entire obedience to God, this inward and outward holiness, this conformity both of heart and life to his will, should be perfect in *degree*. No abatement, no allowance could possibly be made for falling short in any degree, as to any jot or tittle, either of the outward or the inward law. If every commandment relating to outward things was obeyed, yet that was not sufficient, unless every one was obeyed with all the strength, in the highest measure, and most perfect manner. Nor did it answer the demand of this covenant, to love God with every power and faculty, unless he were loved with the full capacity of each, with the whole possibility of the soul.

4. One thing more was indispensably required by the righteousness of the law; namely, that this universal

obedience, this perfect holiness, both of heart and life, should be perfectly uninterrupted also, should continue without any intermission, from the moment wherein God created man, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, until the days of his trial should be ended, and he should be confirmed in life everlasting.

5. The righteousness, then, which is of the law, speaketh on this wise: "Thou, O man of God, stand fast in love, in the image of God wherein thou art made. If thou wilt remain in life, keep the commandments, which are now written in thy heart. Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart. Love, as thyself, every soul that he hath made. Desire nothing but God. Aim at God in every thought, in every word and work. Swerve not in one motion of body or soul, from him, thy mark, and the prize of thy high calling; and let all that is in thee praise his holy name, every power and faculty of thy soul, in every kind, in every degree, and at every moment of thine existence. 'This do, and thou shalt live:' thy light shall shine, thy love shall flame, more and more, till thou art received up into the house of God in the heavens, to reign with him for ever and ever."

6. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise: Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring down Christ from above;" (as though it were some impossible task which God required thee previously to perform, in order to thine acceptance;) "or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ from the dead;" (as though that were still remaining to be done, for the sake of which thou wert to be accepted;) "but what saith it? The word," according to the tenor of which thou mayest now be accepted as an heir of life eternal, "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach," the new covenant which God hath now established with sinful man through Christ Jesus.

7. By "the righteousness which is of faith," is meant that condition of justification (and, in consequence, of

present and final salvation, if we endure therein unto the end) which was given by God to *fallen man*, through the merits and mediation of his only-begotten Son. This was in part revealed to Adam, soon after his fall; being contained in the original promise, made to him, and his seed, concerning the seed of the woman, who should "bruise the serpent's head." (Gen. iii. 15.) It was a little more clearly revealed to Abraham, by the angel of God from heaven, saying, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in thy seed shall all the nations of the world be blessed." (Gen. xxii. 16, 18.) It was yet more fully made known to Moses, to David and to the prophets that followed; and, through them, to many of the people of God in their respective generations. But still the bulk even of these were ignorant of it; and very few understood it clearly. Still "life and immortality" were not so "brought to light," to the Jews of old, as they are now unto us "by the gospel."

8. Now this covenant saith not to sinful man, "Perform unsinning obedience, and live." If this were the term, he would have no more benefit by all which Christ hath done and suffered for him, than if he was required, in order to life, to "ascend into heaven, and bring down Christ from above;" or to "descend into the deep," into the invisible world, and "bring up Christ from the dead." It doth not require any impossibility to be done: (although, to mere man, what it requires would be impossible; but not to man assisted by the Spirit of God :) this were only to mock human weakness. Indeed, strictly speaking, the covenant of *grace* doth not require us to *do* any thing at all, as absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to our justification; but only to *believe* in Him, who, for the sake of his Son, and the propitiation which he hath made, "justifieth the ungodly that worketh not," and imputes his faith to him for righteousness. Even so Abraham "believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith,—that he might be the

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father of all them that believe,—that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.” (Rom. iv. 11) “Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it” (that is, faith) “was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed,” to whom faith shall be imputed for righteousness, shall stand in the stead of perfect obedience, in order to our acceptance with God, “if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered” to death “for our offences, and was raised again for our justification:” (Rom. iv. 23–25:) for the assurance of the remission of our sins, and of a second life to come, to them that believe.

9. What saith then the covenant of forgiveness, of unmerited love, of pardoning mercy? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” In the day thou believest thou shalt surely live. Thou shalt be restored to the favour of God; and in his pleasure is life. Thou shalt be saved from the curse, and from the wrath of God. Thou shalt be quickened from the death of sin into the life of righteousness. And if thou endure to the end, believing in Jesus, thou shalt never taste the second death; but, having suffered with thy Lord, shalt also live and reign with him for ever and ever.

10. Now “this word is nigh thee.” This condition of life is plain, easy, always at hand. “It is in thy mouth, and in thy heart,” through the operation of the Spirit of God. The moment “thou believest in thine heart,” in him whom God “hath raised from the dead,” and “confessest with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,” as *thy* Lord and *thy* God, “thou shalt be saved” from condemnation, from the guilt and punishment of thy former sins, and shalt have power to serve God in true holiness all the remaining days of thy life.

11. What is the difference, then, between the “righteousness which is of the law,” and the “righteousness which is of faith?” between the first covenant, or the covenant of works, and the second, the covenant of grace? The essential, unchangeable difference is this: the one supposes him to whom it is given, to be already

holy and happy, created in the image and enjoying the favour of God; and prescribes the condition whereon he may continue therein, in love and joy, life and immortality: the other supposes him to whom it is given, to be now unholy and unhappy, fallen short of the glorious image of God, having the wrath of God abiding on him, and hastening, through sin, whereby his soul is dead, to bodily death, and death everlasting; and to man in this state it prescribes the condition whereon he may regain the pearl he has lost, may recover the favour and image of God, may retrieve the life of God in his soul, and be restored to the knowledge and the love of God, which is the beginning of life eternal.

12. Again: the covenant of works, in order to man's *continuance* in the favour of God, in his knowledge and love, in holiness and happiness, required of perfect man a *perfect* and uninterrupted *obedience* to every point of the law of God. Whereas, the covenant of grace, in order to man's *recovery* of the favour and the life of God, requires only *faith*; living faith in him, who, through God, justifies him that obeyed not.

13. Yet, again: the covenant of works required of Adam, and all his children, to pay the price themselves, in consideration of which they were to receive all the future blessings of God. But in the covenant of grace, seeing we have nothing to pay, God "frankly forgives us all:" provided only, that we believe in him who hath paid the price for us; who hath given himself a "propitiation for our sins, for the sins of the whole world."

14. Thus the first covenant required what is now *afar off* from all the children of men; namely, unerring obedience, which is far from those who are "conceived and born in sin." Whereas, the second requires what is nigh at hand; as though it should say, "Thou art sin! God is love! Thou by sin art fallen short of the glory of God; yet there is mercy with him. Bring then all thy sins to the pardoning God, and they shall vanish away as a cloud. If thou wert not ungodly, there would be no room for him to justify thee as ungodly. But

now draw near in full assurance of faith. He speaketh, and it is done. Fear not, only believe; for even the just God justifieth all that believe in Jesus."

II. 1. These things considered, it would be easy to show, as I proposed to do in the second place, the folly of trusting in the "righteousness which is of the law," and the wisdom of submitting to the "righteousness which is of faith."

The folly of those who still trust in the "righteousness which is of the law," the terms of which are, "Do this, and live," may abundantly appear from hence: they set out wrong; their very first step is a fundamental mistake: for, before they can ever think of claiming any blessing on the terms of this covenant, they must suppose themselves to be in his state with whom this covenant was made. But how vain a supposition is this; since it was made with Adam in a state of innocence! How weak, therefore, must that whole building be, which stands on such a foundation! And how foolish are they who thus build on the sand; who seem never to have considered, that the covenant of works was not given to man when he was "dead in trespasses and sins," but when he was alive to God, when he knew no sin, but was holy as God is holy; who forget, that it was never designed for the *recovery* of the favour and life of God once lost, but only for the *continuance* and increase thereof, till it should be complete in life everlasting.

2. Neither do they consider, who are thus seeking to establish their "own righteousness, which is of the law," what manner of obedience or righteousness that is which the law indispensably requires. It must be perfect and entire in every point, or it answers not the demand of the law. But which of you is able to perform such obedience? or, consequently, to live thereby? Who among you fulfils every jot and tittle even of the outward commandments of God? doing nothing, great or small, which God forbids? leaving nothing undone which he enjoins? speaking no *idle word*? having your conversation always "meat to minister grace to the hearers?"

and, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatever you do, doing all to the glory of God?" And how much less are you able to fulfil all the inward commandments of God! those which require, that every temper and motion of your soul should be holiness unto the Lord! Are you able to "love God with all your heart?" to love all mankind as your own soul? to "pray without ceasing?" in every thing to give thanks?" to have God always before you? and to keep every affection, desire, and thought in obedience to his law?

3. You should further consider, that the righteousness of the law requires, not only the obeying every command of God, negative and positive, internal and external, but likewise in the perfect degree. In every instance whatever, the voice of the law is, "Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God with all thy strength." It allows no abatement of any kind: it excuses no defect; it condemns every coming short of the full measure of obedience, and immediately pronounces a curse on the offender: it regards only the invariable rules of justice, and saith, "I know not to show mercy."

4. Who then can appear before such a Judge, who is "extreme to mark what is done amiss?" How weak are they who desire to be tried at the bar where "no flesh living can be justified!"—none of the offspring of Adam. For, suppose we did now keep every commandment with all our strength; yet one single breach, which ever was, utterly destroys our whole claim to life. If we have ever offended in any one point, this righteousness is at an end. For the law condemns all who do not perform uninterrupted as well as perfect obedience. So that, according to the sentence of this, for him who hath once sinned, in any degree, "there remaineth only a fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" of God.

5. Is it not then the very foolishness of folly, for fallen man to seek life by this righteousness? for man, who was "shapen in wickedness, and in sin did his mother conceive him?" man, who is, by nature, all "earthly.

unusual, devilish ;" altogether "corrupt and abominable ;" in whom, till he find grace, "dwelleth no good thing ;" nay, who cannot of himself think one good thought ; who is indeed all sin, a mere lump of ungodliness, and who commits sin in every breath he draws ; whose actual transgressions in word and deed are more in number than the hairs of his head ? What stupidity, what senselessness must it be for such an unclean, guilty, helpless worm as this, to dream of seeking acceptance by his own righteousness, of living by "the righteousness" which "is of the law !"

6. Now, whatsoever considerations prove the folly of trusting in the "righteousness which is of the law," prove equally the wisdom of submitting to the "righteousness which is of God by faith." This were easy to be shown with regard to each of the preceding considerations. But to waive this, the wisdom of the first step hereto, the disclaiming our own righteousness, plainly appears from hence, that it is acting according to truth, to the real nature of things. For, what is it more than to acknowledge with our heart, as well as lips, the true state wherein we are ? to acknowledge that we bring with us into the world a corrupt, sinful nature ; more corrupt, indeed, than we can easily conceive, or find words to express ? that hereby we are prone to all that is evil, and averse from all that is good : that we are full of pride, self-will, unruly passions, foolish desires, vile and inordinate affections : lovers of the world, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ? that our lives have been no better than our hearts, but many ways ungodly and unholy, insomuch that our actual sins, both in word and deed, have been as the stars of heaven for multitude ; that, on all these accounts, we are displeasing to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and deserve nothing from him but indignation and wrath and death, the due wages of sin ? that we cannot, by any of our righteousness, (for indeed we have none at all,) nor by any of our works, (for they are as the tree upon which they grow,) appease the wrath of God, or avert the

punishment we have justly deserved ; yea, that, if left to ourselves, we shall only wax worse and worse, sink deeper and deeper into sin, offend God more and more, both with our evil works, and with the evil tempers of our carnal mind, till we fill up the measure of our iniquities, and bring upon ourselves swift destruction ? And is not this the very state wherein by nature we are ? To acknowledge this, then, both with our heart and lips, that is, to disclaim our own righteousness, “the righteousness which is of the law,” is to act according to the real nature of things, and, consequently, is an instance of true wisdom.

7. The wisdom of submitting to “the righteousness of faith” appears, further, from this consideration, that it is the righteousness of God ; I mean here, it is that method of reconciliation with God which hath been chosen and established by God himself, not only as he is the God of wisdom, but as he is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and of every creature which he hath made. Now, as it is not meet for man to say unto God, “What doest thou ?”—as none, who is not utterly void of understanding, will contend with One that is mightier than he, with Him whose kingdom ruleth over all : so it is true wisdom, it is a mark of sound understanding, to acquiesce in whatever He hath chosen ; to say in this, as in all things, “It is the Lord : let him do what seemeth him good.”

8. It may be further considered, that it was of mere grace, of free love, of undeserved mercy, that God hath vouchsafed to sinful man any way of reconciliation with himself ; that we were not cut away from his hand, and utterly blotted out of his remembrance. Therefore, whatever method he is pleased to appoint, of his tender mercy, of his unmerited goodness, whereby his enemies, who have so deeply revolted from him, so long and obstinately rebelled against him, may still find favour in his sight, it is doubtless our wisdom to accept it with all thankfulness.

9. To mention but one consideration more. It is

wisdom to aim at the best end by the best means. Now the best end which any creature can pursue is, happiness in God. And the best end a fallen creature can pursue is, the recovery of the favour and image of God. But the best, indeed the only, means under heaven given to a man, whereby he may regain the favour of God, which is better than life itself, or the image of God, which is the true life of the soul, is the submitting to the "righteousness which is of faith," the believing in the only begotten Son of God.

III. 1. Whosoever therefore thou art, who desirest to be forgiven and reconciled to the favour of God, do not say in thy heart, "I must *first do this*; I must *first* conquer every sin; break off every evil word and work, and do all good to all men; or, I must *first* go to church, receive the Lord's supper, hear more sermons, and say more prayers." Alas, my brother! thou art clean gone out of the way. Thou art still "ignorant of the righteousness of God," and art "seeking to establish thy own righteousness," as the ground of thy reconciliation. Knowest thou not, that thou canst do nothing but sin, till thou art reconciled to God? Wherefore, then, dost thou say, "I must do this and this *first*, and then I shall believe?" Nay, but *first believe!* Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the propitiation for thy sins. Let this good foundation first be laid, and then thou shalt do all things well.

2. Neither say in thy heart, "I cannot be accepted yet, because I am not *good enough*." Who is good enough, who ever was, to merit acceptance at God's hands? Was ever any child of Adam *good enough* for this? or will any, till the consummation of all things? And as for thee, thou art not good at all: there dwelleth in thee no good thing. And thou never wilt be, till thou believe in Jesus. Rather thou wilt find thyself worse and worse. But is there any need of being worse, in order to be accepted? Art thou not *bad enough* already? Indeed thou art; and that God knoweth. And thou thyself canst not deny it. Then delay not. All things are now

ready. "Arise, and wash away thy sins." The fountain is open. Now is the time to wash thee white in the blood of the Lamb. Now he shall "purge" thee as "with hyssop," and thou shalt "be clean:" he shall "wash" thee, and thou shalt "be whiter than snow."

3. Do not say, "But I am not *contrite enough*: I am not *sensible enough* of my sins." I know it. I would to God thou wert more *sensible* of them, more *contrite* a thousand-fold than thou art. But do not stay for this. It may be, God will make thee so, not before thou believest, but by believing. It may be, thou wilt not weep much, till thou lovest much because thou hast had much forgiven. In the mean time, look unto Jesus. Behold, how he loveth thee! What could he have done more for thee which he hath not done?

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,  
Was ever love like thine?"

Look steadily upon him, till he looks on thee, and break thy hard heart. Then shall thy "head" be "waters," and thy "eyes fountains of tears."

4. Nor yet do thou say, "I must *do* something more *before* I come to Christ." I grant, supposing thy Lord should delay his coming, it were meet and right to wait for his appearing, in doing, so far as thou hast power, whatsoever he hath commanded thee. But there is no necessity for making such a supposition. How knowest thou that he will delay? Perhaps he will appear, as the dayspring from on high, before the morning light. Oh, do not set him a time! Expect him every hour. Now he is nigh! even at the door!

5. And to what end wouldest thou wait for *more sincerity* before thy sins are blotted out? To make thee more worthy of the grace of God? Alas, thou art still "establishing thy own righteousness." He will have mercy, not because thou art worthy of it, but because his compassions fail not; not because thou art righteous, but because Jesus Christ hath atoned for thy sins.

Again: if there be any thing good in *sincerity*, why

dost thou expect it *before* thou hast faith?—seeing faith itself is the only root of whatever is really good and holy.

Above all, how long wilt thou forget, that whatsoever thou doest, or whatsoever thou hast, before thy sins are forgiven thee, it avails nothing with God toward the procuring of thy forgiveness! yea, and that it must all be cast behind thy back, trampled under foot, made no account of, or thou wilt never find favour in God's sight; because, until then, thou canst not ask it as a mere sinner, guilty, lost, undone, having nothing to plead, nothing to offer to God, but only the merits of his well-beloved Son, "who loved *thee*, and gave himself for *thee*!"

6. To conclude. Whosoever thou art, O man, who hast the sentence of death in thyself, who feelest thyself a condemned sinner, and hast the wrath of God abiding on thee: unto thee saith the Lord, not, "Do this,"—perfectly obey all my commands,—“and live;” but, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “The word of faith is nigh unto thee:” now, at this instant, in the present moment, and in thy present state, sinner as thou art, just as thou art, believe the gospel; and “I will be merciful unto *thy* unrighteousness, and *thy* iniquities will I remember no more.”

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON VI.

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What two covenants are placed in opposition by the apostle?

Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What was the error of the Jews, to whom the apostle writes?

Ques. 3. (§ 3.) Of what were they ignorant?

Ques. 4. (§ 4.) Who commit the same error?

Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What does the righteousness of the law say?

Ques. 6. (I. 2, 3, 4.) What did this righteousness require?

Ques. 7. (I. 5.) How does it address the sinner?

Ques. 8. (I. 6.) What does the righteousness of faith say?

Ques. 9. (I. 7.) How is this righteousness defined?

Ques. 10. (I. 8.) Strictly speaking, does this covenant of grace require man *to do* any thing? Observe that faith, though an act precedent to and the condition of pardon or justification, is in no sense a meritorious or procuring *cause* of pardon.

Ques. 11. (I. 9.) What does the covenant of grace or pardon say?

Ques. 12. (I. 10.) What is said of this condition of life?

Ques. 13. (I. 11.) What is the difference between the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith?

Ques. 14. (I. 12.) What is required for man's recovery?

Ques. 15. (I. 13.) How is the debtor forgiven?

Ques. 16. (I. 14.) How are the two covenants contrasted?

Ques. 17. (II. 1.) What is proposed in the second division?

Ques. 18. (II. 2.) Can the obedience of the law be fulfilled by a sinner?

Ques. 19. (II. 3.) What further is required?

Ques. 20. (II. 4.) What is the effect of a single breach?

Ques. 21. (II. 5.) What is said of the folly of this course?

Ques. 22. (II. 6.) How does he describe the state of nature?

Ques. 23. (II. 7.) By whom is this method of reconciliation chosen?

Ques. 24. (II. 8.) Ought not God, the Creator, to choose the terms?

Ques. 25. (II. 9.) How is its wisdom proven?

Ques. 26. (III. 1.) What is the first duty of the seeker?

Ques. 27. (III. 2.) Are any persons good enough to be accepted?

Ques. 28. (III. 3.) What is said of being contrite enough?

Ques. 29. (III. 4.) Ought any one to wait in order to do something more?

Ques. 30. (III. 5.) What is said of waiting for sincerity?

Ques. 31. (III. 6.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON VII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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EVERY great revival of genuine religion will become the occasion for the development of more or less error in doctrine. On one side we find the tendency to exalt the works of the law, and on the other to depreciate them. In Mr. Wesley's day the revival of the doctrine of justification by faith only was the means of producing numbers of essays, sermons, and polemical treatises to prove that works and faith must unite in the justification of the soul, and therefore regeneration was a slow, life-long process, which was completed only in death. This doctrine differed but little from practical Romanism. Against this erroneous teaching Mr. Wesley brought all the powers of his exact logic, scriptural knowledge, and personal experience. But no sooner were the "legalists" silenced than the advocates of the opposite error appeared. The Moravians in London, especially in the early part of his career, gave Mr. Wesley a great deal of trouble and vexation. They taught that no man ought to seek for the divine blessings, but every one should sit *still*, and wait for the power of God. The "still" brethren were as thorns in the side of the great revivalist. They perverted the members of his societies, and paved the way for Antinomian errors of the most heinous character. The study of this conflict will be profitable to the Christian minister. There is always a tendency to *rest* in religious life. To "cease from our own works as a means of perfecting the salvation through Christ in the regeneration of the soul is right;" but after we enter the kingdom "faith *works* by

love," and purifies the heart. Therefore, we must "go on to perfection."

This sermon presents salvation as a subjective experience of religious life, and thus preserves us from Antinomianism, as the preceding guards us against "legalism."

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON VII.

I. The nature of true religion as "the kingdom of God." Defined from Rom. xiv. 17: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

1. Not meat and drink. The sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jewish law, outward forms of worship, nor any outward acts, however good, nor right opinions, but the hidden man of—

2. The heart, righteousness, love to God, love to our neighbor, happiness, peace from the witnessing Spirit, joy in the Holy Ghost—called the kingdom, because thus does God reign in the heart.

#### II. The Way.

1. Repentance; conviction, or self-knowledge; conviction of inward corruption, of evil passions, of sinful actions, of exposure to eternal death, of inability to cancel the past or to amend the future. To conviction must be added sorrow for sin and desire to return to God.

2. To the penitent there is one step more: "*Believe the gospel.*" The gospel is: "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners." Believe this, not with bare assent, but with sure trust, divine conviction, confidence in a pardoning God. The fruit of this faith will be peace, joy, and love.

## SERMON VII.

### THE WAY TO THE KINGDOM.

*'The kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.'*—MARK i. 15.

THESE words naturally lead us to consider, first, the nature of true religion, here termed by our Lord, "the kingdom of God," which, saith he, "is at hand;" and, secondly, the way thereto, which he points out in those words, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

1. We are, first, to consider the nature of true religion, here termed by our Lord, "the kingdom of God." The same expression the great apostle uses in his Epistle to the Romans, where he likewise explains his Lord's words, saying, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.)

2. "The kingdom of God," or true religion, "is not meat and drink." It is well known, that not only the unconverted Jews, but great numbers of those who had received the faith of Christ, were, notwithstanding, "zealous of the law," (Acts xxi. 20,) even the ceremonial law of Moses. Whatsoever, therefore, they found written therein, either concerning meat and drink offerings, or the distinction between clean and unclean meats, they not only observed themselves, but vehemently pressed the same, even on those "among the Gentiles" (or heathens) "who were turned to God;" yea, to such a degree, that some of them taught, wheresoever they came among them, "Except ye be circumcised and keep the law," (the whole ritual law,) "ye cannot be saved." (Acts xv. 1, 24.)

3. In opposition to these, the apostle declares, both

here and in many other places, that true religion does not consist in *meat* and *drink*, or in any ritual observances; nor, indeed, in any outward thing whatever; in any thing exterior to the heart; the whole substance thereof lying in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

4. Not in any *outward thing*; such as *forms* or *ceremonies*, even of the most excellent kind. Supposing these to be ever so decent and significant, ever so expressive of inward things: supposing them ever so helpful, not only to the vulgar, whose thought reaches little farther than their sight; but even to men of understanding, men of stronger capacities, as doubtless they may sometimes be: yea, supposing them, as in the case of the Jews, to be appointed by God himself; yet even during the period of time wherein that appointment remains in force, true religion does not principally consist therein; nay, strictly speaking, not at all. How much more must this hold concerning such rites and forms as are only of human appointment! The religion of Christ rises infinitely higher, and lies immensely deeper, than all these. These are good in their place; just so far as they are in fact subservient to true religion. And it were superstition to object against them, while they are applied only as occasional helps to human weakness. But let no man carry them farther. Let no man dream that they have any intrinsic worth; or that religion cannot subsist without them. This were to make them an abomination to the Lord.

5. The nature of religion is so far from consisting in these, in forms of worship, or rites and ceremonies, that it does not properly consist in any outward actions, of what kind soever. It is true, a man cannot have any religion who is guilty of vicious, immoral actions; or who does to others what he would not they should do unto him, if he were in the same circumstances. And it is also true, that he can have no real religion who "knows to do good, and doeth it not." Yet may a man both abstain from outward evil, and do good, and still have no religion. Yea, two persons may do the

same outward work; suppose feeding the hungry, or clothing the naked; and, in the mean time, one of these may be truly religious, and the other have no religion at all: for the one may act from the love of God, and the other from the love of praise. So manifest it is, that although true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature thereof lies deeper still, even in "the hidden-man of the heart."

6. I say of *the heart*. For neither does religion consist in orthodoxy, or right opinions; which, although they are not properly outward things, are not in the heart, but the understanding. A man may be orthodox in every point; he may not only espouse right opinions, but zealously defend them against all opposers; he may think justly concerning the incarnation of our Lord, concerning the ever-blessed Trinity, and every other doctrine contained in the oracles of God; he may assent to all the three Creeds,—that called the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian; and yet it is possible he may have no religion at all, no more than a Jew, Turk, or pagan. He may be almost as orthodox—as the devil, (though indeed not altogether; for every man errs in something; whereas, we cannot well conceive him to hold any erroneous opinion,) and may, all the while, be as great a stranger as he to the religion of the heart.

7. This alone is religion, truly so called; this alone is in the sight of God of great price. The apostle sums it all up in three particulars, "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And, first, *righteousness*. We cannot be at a loss concerning this, if we remember the words of our Lord, describing the two grand branches thereof, on which "hang all the law and the prophets:" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: this is the first and great commandment;" (Mark xii. 30;) the first and great branch of Christian righteousness. Thou shalt delight thyself in the Lord thy God; thou shalt seek and find all happiness in him. He shall be "thy shield and thy

exceeding great reward," in time and in eternity All thy bones shall say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Thou shalt hear and fulfil his word, who saith, "My son, give me thy heart." And, having given him thy heart, thy inmost soul, to reign there without a rival, thou mayest well cry out, in the fulness of thy heart, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my strong rock, and my defence; my Saviour, my God, and my might, in whom I will trust; my buckler, the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge."

8. And the second commandment is like unto this; the second great branch of Christian righteousness is closely and inseparably connected therewith; even, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." *Thou shalt love,*—thou shalt embrace with the most tender good-will, the most earnest and cordial affection, the most inflamed desires of preventing or removing all evil, and of procuring for him every possible good. *Thy neighbour,*—that is, not only thy friend, thy kinsman, or thy acquaintance; not only the virtuous, the friendly, him that loves thee, that prevents or returns thy kindness; but every child of man, every human creature, every soul which God hath made; not excepting him whom thou never hast seen in the flesh, whom thou knowest not either by face or name; not excepting him whom thou knowest to be evil and unthankful, him that still despitefully uses and persecutes thee: him thou shalt love *as thyself*; with the same invariable thirst after his happiness in every kind; the same unwearied care to screen him from whatever might grieve or hurt either his soul or body.

9. Now is not this love "the fulfilling of the law?" the sum of all Christian righteousness?—of all inward righteousness; for it necessarily implies "bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind," (seeing "love is not puffed up,") "gentleness, meekness, long-suffering:" (for love "is not provoked;") "believeth, hopeth, endureth all things:") and of all outward righteousness; for "love worketh no evil to his neighbour," either by word

or deed. It cannot willingly hurt or grieve any one. And it is zealous of good works. Every lover of mankind, as he hath opportunity, "doeth good unto all men," being (without partiality, and without hypocrisy) "full of mercy and good fruits."

10. But true religion, or a heart right toward God and man, implies happiness as well as holiness. For it is not only "righteousness," but also "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." What peace? "The peace of God," which God only can give, and the world cannot take away; the peace which "passeth all understanding," all barely rational conception; being a supernatural sensation, a divine taste of "the powers of the world to come;" such as the natural man knoweth not, how wise soever in the things of this world; nor, indeed, can he know it, in his present state, "because it is spiritually discerned." It is a peace that banishes all doubt, all painful uncertainty; the Spirit of God bearing witness with the spirit of a Christian, that he is "a child of God." And it banishes fear, all such fear as hath torment; the fear of the wrath of God; the fear of hell; the fear of the devil; and, in particular, the fear of death: he that hath the peace of God, desiring, if it were the will of God, "to depart, and to be with Christ."

11. With this peace of God, wherever it is fixed in the soul, there is also "joy in the Holy Ghost;" joy wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, by the ever-blessed Spirit of God. He it is that worketh in us that calm, humble rejoicing in God, through Christ Jesus, "by whom we have now received the atonement," *καταλλαγῆς*, the reconciliation with God; and that enables us boldly to confirm the truth of the royal Psalmist's declaration, "Blessed is the man" (or rather, *happy*) "whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and whose sin is covered" He it is that inspires the Christian soul with that even, solid joy, which arises from the testimony of the Spirit that he is a child of God; and that gives him to "rejoice with joy unspeakable, in hope of the glory of God;" hope both of the glorious image of God,

which is in part, and shall be fully, "revealed in him;" and of that crown of glory which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him.

12. This holiness and happiness, joined in one, are sometimes styled, in the inspired writings, "the kingdom of God," (as by our Lord in the text,) and sometimes, "the kingdom of heaven." It is termed, "the kingdom of God," because it is the immediate fruit of God's reigning in the soul. So soon as ever he takes unto himself his mighty power, and sets up his throne in our hearts, they are instantly filled with this "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is called "the kingdom of heaven," because it is (in a degree) heaven opened in the soul. For whosoever they are that experience this, they can aver before angels and men,

"Everlasting life is won,  
Glory is on earth begun;"

according to the constant tenor of Scripture, which everywhere bears record, God "hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son" (reigning in his heart) "hath life," even life everlasting. (1 John v. 11, 12.) For "this is life eternal, to know thee; the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) And they to whom this is given may confidently address God, though they were in the midst of a fiery furnace,—

"Thee, Lord, safe shielded by thy power,  
Thee, Son of God, ЖЕHOВАН, we adore;  
In form of man descending to appear.  
To thee be ceaseless hallelujahs given,  
Praise, as in heaven thy throne, we offer here;  
For where thy presence is display'd, is heaven."

13 And this "kingdom of God," or of heaven, "is at hand." As these words were originally spoken, they implied that "the time" was then fulfilled, God being "made manifest in the flesh," when he would set up his kingdom among men, and reign in the hearts of his people. And is not the time now fulfilled? For, "Lo!"

(saith he,) "I am with you always," you who preach remission of sins in my name, "even unto the end of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Wheresoever, therefore, the gospel of Christ is preached, this his "kingdom is nigh at hand." It is not far from every one of you. Ye may this hour enter therinto, if so be ye hearken to his voice, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

II. 1. This is the way: walk ye in it. And, first, "repent;" that is, know yourselves. This is the first repentance, previous to faith; even conviction, or self-knowledge. Awake then, thou that sleepest. Know thyself to be a sinner, and what manner of sinner thou art. Know that corruption of thy inmost nature, whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness; whereby "the flesh lusteth" always "contrary to the Spirit," through that "carnal mind" which "is enmity against God," which "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul; that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations being out of course. The eyes of thine understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God, or the things of God. The clouds of ignorance and error rest upon thee, and cover thee with the shadow of death. Thou knowest nothing yet as thou oughtest to know, neither God, nor the world, nor thyself. Thy will is no longer the will of God, but is utterly perverse and distorted, averse from all good, from all which God loves, and prone to all evil, to every abomination which God hateth. Thy affections are alienated from God, and scattered abroad over all the earth. All thy passions, both thy desires and aversions, thy joys and sorrows, thy hopes and fears, are out of frame, are either undue in their degree, or placed on undue objects. So that there is no soundness in thy soul; but "from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot," (to use the strong expression of the Prophet,) there are only "wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

2. Such is the inbred corruption of thy heart, of thy

very inmost nature. And what manner of branches canst thou expect to grow from such an evil root? Hence springs unbelief; ever departing from the living God; saying, "Who is the Lord, that I should serve him? Tush! Thou God carest not for it." Hence independence; affecting to be like the Most High. Hence pride, in all its forms; teaching thee to say, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." From this evil fountain flow forth the bitter streams of vanity, thirst of praise, ambition, covetousness, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. From this arise anger, hatred, malice, revenge, envy, jealousy, evil surmisings: from this, all the foolish and hurtful lusts that now "pierce thee through with many sorrows," and, if not timely prevented, will at length drown thy soul in everlasting perdition.

3. And what fruits can grow on such branches as these? Only such as are bitter and evil continually. Of pride cometh contention, vain boasting, seeking and receiving praise of men, and so robbing God of that glory which he cannot give unto another. Of the lust of the flesh come gluttony or drunkenness, luxury or sensuality, fornication, uncleanness; variously defiling that body which was designed for a temple of the Holy Ghost: of unbelief, every evil word and work. But the time would fail, shouldst thou reckon up all; all the idle words thou hast spoken, provoking the Most High, grieving the Holy One of Israel; all the evil works thou hast done, either wholly evil in themselves, or, at least, not done to the glory of God. For thy actual sins are more than thou art able to express, more than the hairs of thy head. Who can number the sands of the sea, or the drops of rain, or thy iniquities?

4. And knowest thou not that "the wages of sin is death?"—death, not only temporal, but eternal. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. It shall die the second death. This is the sentence, to be "punished" with never

ending death, "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Knowest thou not that every sinner *ενοχος εστι τη γεινη του πυρος*,—not properly "is in danger of hell-fire;" that expression is far too weak; but rather, "is under the sentence of hell-fire;" doomed already, just dragging to execution. Thou art guilty of everlasting death. It is the just reward of thy inward and outward wickedness. It is just that the sentence should now take place. Dost thou see, dost thou feel this? Art thou thoroughly convinced, that thou deservest God's wrath, and everlasting damnation? Would God do thee no wrong, if he now commanded the earth to open and swallow thee up? if thou wert now to go down quick into the pit, into the fire that shall never be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou hast a deep sense that these things are so; and that it is of his mere mercy thou art not consumed, swept away from the face of the earth.

5. And what wilt thou do to appease the wrath of God, to atone for all thy sins, and to escape the punishment thou hast so justly deserved? Alas, thou canst do nothing; nothing that will in anywise make amends to God for one evil work, or word, or thought. If thou couldest now do all things well, if from this very hour till thy soul should return to God thou couldest perform perfect, uninterrupted obedience, even this would not atone for what is past. The not increasing thy debt would not discharge it. It would still remain as great as ever. Yea, the present and future obedience of all the men upon earth, and all the angels in heaven, would never make satisfaction to the justice of God for one single sin. How vain, then, was the thought of atoning for thy own sins, by any thing thou couldest do! It costeth far more to redeem one soul than all mankind is able to pay. So that were there no other help for a guilty sinner, without doubt he must have perished everlastingly.

6. But suppose perfect obedience, for the time to come.

could atone for the sins that are past, this would profit thee nothing; for thou art not able to perform it; no, not in any one point. Begin now: make the trial. Shake off that outward sin that so easily besetteth thee. Thou canst not. How then wilt thou change thy life from all evil to all good? Indeed, it is impossible to be done, unless first thy heart be changed. For, so long as the tree remains evil, it cannot bring forth good fruit. But art thou able to change thy own heart, from all sin to all holiness? to quicken a soul that is dead in sin,—dead to God, and alive only to the world? No more than thou art able to quicken a dead body, to raise to life him that lieth in the grave. Yea, thou art not able to quicken thy soul in any degree, no more than to give any degree of life to the dead body. Thou canst do nothing, more or less, in this matter; thou art utterly without strength. To be deeply sensible of this, how helpless thou art, as well as how guilty and how sinful,—this is that “repentance not to be repented of,” which is the forerunner of the kingdom of God.

7. If to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward sins, of thy utter guiltiness and helplessness, there be added suitable affections,—sorrow of heart, for having despised thy own mercies,—remorse, and self-condemnation, having thy mouth stopped,—shame to lift up thine eyes to heaven,—fear of the wrath of God abiding on thee, of his curse hanging over thy head, and of the fiery indignation ready to devour those who forget God, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ,—earnest desire to escape from that indignation, to cease from evil, and learn to do well;—then I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” One step more, and thou shalt enter in. Thou “dost repent.” Now, “believe the gospel.”

8. *The gospel*, (that is, good tidings, good news for guilty, helpless sinners,) in the largest sense of the word, means, the whole revelation made to men by Jesus Christ; and sometimes the whole account of what our Lord did and suffered while he tabernacled among men

The substance of all is, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" or, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, to the end we might not perish, but have everlasting life;" or, "He was bruised for our transgressions, he was wounded for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

9. *Believe* this, and the kingdom of God is thine. By faith thou attainest the promise. "He pardoneth and absolveth all that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." As soon as ever God hath spoken to thy heart, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee," his kingdom comes: thou hast "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

10. Only beware thou do not deceive thy own soul, with regard to the nature of this faith. It is not, as some have fondly conceived, a bare assent to the truth of the Bible, of the articles of our Creed, or of all that is contained in the Old and New Testament. The devils believe this, as well as I or thou! And yet they are devils still. But it is, over and above this, a sure trust in the mercy of God, through Christ Jesus. It is a confidence in a pardoning God. It is a divine evidence or conviction that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their" former "trespasses;" and in particular, that the Son of God hath loved *me*, and given himself for *me*; and that I, even I, am now reconciled to God by the blood of the cross.

11. Dost thou thus believe? Then the peace of God is in thy heart, and sorrow and sighing flee away. Thou art no longer in doubt of the love of God; it is clear as the noonday sun. Thou criest out, "My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth, from one generation to another." Thou art no longer afraid of hell, or death, or him that had once the power of death, the devil; no, nor painfully afraid of God himself! only thou hast a tender, filial fear of offending him. Dost

thou believe? Then thy "soul doth magnify the Lord," and thy "spirit rejoiceth in God thy Saviour." Thou rejoicest in that thou hast "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Thou rejoicest in that "Spirit of adoption," which crieth in thy heart, "Abba, Father!" Thou rejoicest in a "hope full of immortality;" in reaching forth unto the "mark for the prize of thy high calling;" in an earnest expectation of all the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him.

12. Dost thou now believe? Then the "love of God is" now "shed abroad in thy heart." Thou lovest him, because he first loved us. And because thou lovest God, thou lovest thy brother also. And being filled with "love, peace, joy," thou art also filled with "long-suffering, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, meekness, temperance," and all the other fruits of the same Spirit; in a word, with whatever dispositions are holy, are heavenly, or divine. For while thou "beholdest with open," uncovered, "face" (the veil now being taken away) "the glory of the Lord," his glorious love, and the glorious image wherein thou wast created, thou art "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."

13. This repentance, this faith, this peace, joy, love; this change from glory to glory, is what the wisdom of the world has voted to be madness, mere enthusiasm, utter distraction. But thou, O man of God, regard them not; be thou moved by none of these things. Thou knowest in whom thou hast believed. See that no man take thy crown. Whereunto thou hast already attained, hold fast, and follow, till thou attain all the great and precious promises. And thou who hast not yet known him, let not vain men make thee ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Be thou in nothing terrified by those who speak evil of the things which they know not. God will soon turn thy heaviness into joy. Oh, let not thy hands hang down! Yet a little longer, and he will take away thy fears, and give thee the spirit of a sound

mind. He is nigh "that justifieth : who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that rose again, who is even now at the right hand of God, making intercession" for thee.

Now cast thyself on the Lamb of God, with all thy sins, how many soever they be ; and "an entrance shall" now "be ministered unto thee into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !"

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## HYMNS:

### I.

FATHER of me, and all mankind,  
 And all the hosts above,  
 Let every understanding mind  
 Unite to praise thy love :

To know thy nature, and thy name,  
 One God in Persons Three ;  
 And glorify the great I AM  
 Through all eternity.

Thy kingdom come, with power and grace  
 To every heart of man :  
 Thy peace, and joy, and righteousness,  
 In all our bosoms reign.

The righteousness that never ends,  
 But makes an end of sin,  
 The joy that human thought transcends,  
 Into our souls bring in :

The kingdom of establish'd peace,  
 Which can no more remove ;  
 The perfect power of Godliness,  
 Th' omnipotence of Love.

## II.

**JEHOVAH**, God the Father, bless,  
And thy own work defend !  
With mercy's outstretch'd arms embrace,  
And keep us to the end !

Preserve the creatures of thy love ;  
By providential care  
Conducted to the realms above,  
To sing thy goodness there

**Jehovah**, God the Son, reveal  
The brightness of thy face :  
And all thy pardon'd people fill  
With plenitude of grace !

Shine forth with all the Deity,  
Which dwells in thee alone ;  
And lift us up, thy face to see  
On thy eternal throne.

**Jehovah**, God the Spirit, shine,  
Father and Son to show !  
With bliss ineffable, divine,  
Our ravished hearts o'erflow.

Sure earnest of that happiness,  
Which human hope transcends,  
Be thou our everlasting peace,  
When grace in glory ends.

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON VII.

- Ques. 1. (I. 1.) What are we first to consider?
- Ques. 2. (I. 2.) State what true religion is *not*. What was the error of the Jews?
- Ques. 3. (I. 3.) How does the apostle oppose them?
- Ques. 4. (I. 4.) What is said of rites and forms?
- Ques. 5. (I. 5.) What is the distinction between the same action performed by different persons?
- Ques. 6. (I. 6.) What is said of orthodoxy, or right opinions?
- Ques. 7. (I. 7.) How does the apostle define true religion?
- Ques. 8. (I. 8.) What is the second commandment.
- Ques. 9. (I. 9.) How does love fulfill the law?
- Ques. 10. (I. 10.) What does true religion imply?
- Ques. 11. (I. 11.) What follows the peace of God?
- Ques. 12. (I. 12.) Why is it called "the kingdom of God?"
- Ques. 13. (I. 13.) What did these words imply originally?
- Ques. 14. (II. 1.) What is first to be done?
- Ques. 15. (II. 2.) What is said of the corruption of the heart?
- Ques. 16. (II. 3.) What are its fruits?
- Ques. 17. (II. 4.) What is said of the wages of sin?
- Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What can the sinner do to appease the wrath of God?
- Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What is said of perfect obedience hereafter?
- Ques. 20. (II. 7.) What should be added to the conviction of inward and outward sin?
- Ques. 21. (II. 8.) What is the meaning of the gospel?

Ques. 22. (II. 9.) What follows belief of this?

Ques. 23. (II. 10.) How is danger of delusion prevented?

Ques. 24. (II. 11.) What follows present belief of this gospel?

Ques. 25. (II. 12.) Why do we love God?

Ques. 26. (II. 13.) How does this sermon conclude?

SERMON VIII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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HAVING set forth in the preceding discourses the steps by which a sinner enters the kingdom of God, Mr. Wesley now considers the fruits of this change of heart and life. The knowledge of sins forgiven is more than a mere consciousness of right intention and sincerity of purpose. We have, therefore, in this sermon the evidence of the new life as it is furnished to our consciousness by the Holy Spirit. The term *conversion* is applied to this change, because it reverses the whole tenor of the man's life. He was in a state of darkness by nature, without God and without hope; now he is a child of God and an heir of heaven. Formerly he was under bondage to sin and Satan; now he is the Lord's freeman, and is able by grace to overcome sin. The doctrine of a conscious pardon of sin, a personal knowledge of the divine forgiveness, was the great truth which distinguished Methodism from all the systems of theology taught in the last century.

Justification by faith only was revived by Luther and the reformers of the sixteenth century; but, as it happened in the second and third centuries, after the death of the apostles, a mere change of belief from heathenism to Christianity, or from Romanism to Protestantism, was regarded as genuine conversion. To give the assent of the mind to certain propositions or doctrines is one thing; to believe on the Son of God to the saving of the soul is another. Mere assent to truth of any kind is not enough. It is the "dead faith" of which the Apostle James speaks. Faith that does

not produce good works is of no avail; so, also, faith that is not attended by joy and peace in the Holy Ghost is without comfort.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON VIII.

I. Those that are in Christ are distinguished—

1. By faith. 2. They do not sin. 3. They crucify the flesh. 4. They walk after the Spirit. 5. They exhibit its fruits.

II. They are free from condemnation.

1. For all past sin, free before God and their consciences. 2. For all present sins; for they do not commit them. 3. They are not condemned for inward sin; for though it remains, they do not yield themselves to it. 4. Nor for the sin which cleaves to all they do; because they have constant union with Christ, the Intercessor. 5. Nor, for the same reason, are they condemned for infirmities. 6. Nor for any thing which it is not in their power to help. 7. But sins of surprise bring condemnation when there is neglect, but the watchful soul immediately returns to Christ.

III. Practical lessons.

1. Of encouragement to the weak and fearful. 2. Of warning to the Christian who carelessly sins. 3. Of patient courage to the one who struggles against inward sin. 4. Of support to the one beset with infirmities and defects. 5. Of counsel to the one overtaken by sudden temptation.

## SERMON VIII.

## THE FIRST FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” — ROMANS viii. 1.

1. BY “them which are in Christ Jesus,” St. Paul evidently means, those who truly believe in him; those who, “being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” They who thus believe do no longer “walk after the flesh,” no longer follow the motions of corrupt nature, but “after the Spirit;” both their thoughts, words, and works are under the direction of the blessed Spirit of God.

2. “There is therefore now no condemnation to” these. There is no condemnation to them from God; for he hath *justified* them “freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus.” He hath forgiven all their iniquities, and blotted out all their sins. And there is no condemnation to them from within; for they “have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that they might know the things which are freely given to them of God;” (1 Cor. ii. 12;) which Spirit “beareth witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God.” And to this is added the testimony of their conscience, “that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, they have had their conversation in the world.” (2 Cor. i. 12.)

3. But because this scripture has been so frequently misunderstood, and that in so dangerous a manner; because such multitudes of “unlearned and unstable men” (οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστηρεῖς, men untaught of God, and conse

quently unestablished in the truth which is after godliness) have wrested it to their own destruction; I propose to show, as clearly as I can, first, who those are "which are in Christ Jesus," and "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and, secondly, how "there is no condemnation to" these. I shall conclude with some practical inferences.

I. 1. First, I am to show, who those are that "are in Christ Jesus." And are they not those who believe in his name? those who are "found in him, not having their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith?" These, "who have redemption through his blood," are properly said to be *in him*; for they dwell in Christ, and Christ in them. They are joined unto the Lord in one Spirit. They are ingrafted into him, as branches into the vine. They are united, as members to their head, in a manner which words cannot express, nor could it before enter into their hearts to conceive.

2. Now "whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not;" "walketh not after the flesh." The flesh, in the usual language of St. Paul, signifies corrupt nature. In this sense he uses the word, writing to the Galatians, "The works of the flesh are manifest;" (Gal. v. 19;) and a little before, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust" (or desire) "of the flesh." (Ver. 16.) To prove which, namely, that those who "walk by the Spirit" do not "fulfil the lusts of the flesh," he immediately adds, "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit; and the Spirit lusteth against the flesh; (for these are contrary to each other;) that ye may not do the things which ye would." So the words are literally translated; (*να μη α αν δελητε, ταυτα ποιητε*;) not, "So that ye cannot do the things that ye would;" as if the flesh overcame the Spirit: a translation which hath not only nothing to do with the original text of the apostle, but likewise makes his whole argument nothing worth; yea, asserts just the reverse of what he is proving.

3. They who are of Christ, who abide in him, "have

crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts." They abstain from all those works of the flesh; from "adultery and fornication;" from "uncleanness and lasciviousness;" from "idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance;" from "emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings;" from every design, and word, and work, to which the corruption of nature leads. Although they feel the root of bitterness in themselves, yet are they endued with power from on high to trample it continually under foot, so that it cannot "spring up to trouble them;" insomuch that every fresh assault which they undergo, only gives them fresh occasion of praise, of crying out, "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

4. They "now walk after the Spirit," both in their hearts and lives. They are taught of him to love God and their neighbour, with a love which is as "a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." And by him they are led into every holy desire, into every divine and heavenly temper, till every thought which arises in their heart is holiness unto the Lord.

5. They who "walk after the Spirit" are also led by him into all holiness of conversation. Their "speech is always in grace, seasoned with salt;" with the love and fear of God. "No corrupt communication comes out of their mouth; but only that which is good;" that which is "to the use of edifying;" which is "meet to minister grace to the hearers." And herein likewise do they exercise themselves day and night, to do only the things which please God; in all their outward behaviour to follow Him "who left us an example that we might tread in his steps;" in all their intercourse with their neighbour, to walk in justice, mercy, and truth; and "whatsoever they do," in every circumstance of life, to "do all to the glory of God."

6. These are they who indeed "walk after the Spirit." Being filled with faith and with the Holy Ghost, they possess in their hearts, and show forth in their lives, in

the whole course of their words and actions, the genuine fruits of the Spirit of God, namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," and whatsoever else is lovely or praiseworthy. "They adorn in all things the gospel of God our Saviour;" and give full proof to all mankind, that they are indeed actuated by the same Spirit "which raised up Jesus from the dead."

II. 1. I proposed to show, in the second place, how "there is no condemnation to them which are" thus "in Christ Jesus," and thus "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And, first, to believers in Christ, walking thus, "there is no condemnation" on account of their past sins. God condemneth them not for any of these: they are as though they had never been; they are cast "as a stone into the depth of the sea," and he remembereth them no more. God, having "set forth his Son to be a propitiation" for them "through faith in his blood," hath declared unto them "his righteousness for the remission of the sins that are past." He layeth therefore none of these to their charge; their memorial is perished with them.

2. And there is no condemnation in their own breast; no sense of guilt, or dread of the wrath of God. They "have the witness in themselves:" they are conscious of their interest in the blood of sprinkling. "They have not received again the spirit of bondage unto fear," unto doubt and racking uncertainty; but they have "received the Spirit of adoption," crying in their heart, "Abba, Father." Thus being "justified by faith," they have the peace of God ruling in their hearts; flowing from a continual sense of his pardoning mercy, and "the answer of a good conscience toward God."

3. If it be said, But sometimes a believer in Christ may lose his sight of the mercy of God; sometimes such darkness may fall upon him that he no longer sees Him that is invisible, no longer feels that witness in himself of his part in the atoning blood; and then he is inwardly

condemned, he hath again "the sentence of death in himself:" I answer, supposing it so to be, supposing him not to see the mercy of God, then he is not a believer: for faith implies light; the light of God shining upon the soul. So far, therefore, as any one loses this light, he, for the time, loses his faith. And, no doubt, a true believer in Christ may lose the light of faith; and so far as this is lost, he may, for a time, fall again into condemnation. But this is not the case of them who now "are in Christ Jesus," who now believe in his name. For so long as they believe, and walk after the Spirit, neither God condemns them, nor their own heart.

4. They are not condemned, secondly, for any present sins, for now transgressing the commandments of God. For they do not transgress them: they do not "walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit." This is the continual proof of their "love of God, that they keep his commandments;" even as St. John bears witness, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. For his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God:" he cannot, so long as that seed of God, that loving holy faith, remaineth in him. So long as "he keepeth himself" herein, "that wicked one toucheth him not." Now it is evident, he is not condemned for the sins which he doth not commit at all. They, therefore, who are thus "led by the Spirit are not under the law:" (Gal. v. 18 :) not under the curse or condemnation of it; for it condemns none but those who break it. Thus, that law of God, "Thou shalt not steal," condemns none but those who do steal. Thus, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy," condemns those only who do not keep it holy. But against the fruits of the Spirit "there is no law;" (ver. 23 ;) as the apostle more largely declares in those memorable words of his former Epistle to Timothy: "We know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; knowing this," (if, while he uses the law of God, in order either to convince or direct, he know and remember this,) *οτι δικαιο νομος ου κατα*; (not, that the law is not made for a righteous

man ; but) " that the law does not lie against a righteous man : " it has no force against him, no power to condemn him ; " but against the lawless and disobedient, against the ungodly and sinners, against the unholy and profane ; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." (1 Tim. i. 8, 9, 11.)

5 They are not condemned, thirdly, for inward sin, even though it does now remain. That the corruption of nature does still remain, even in those who are the children of God by faith ; that they have in them the seeds of pride and vanity, of anger, lust, and evil desire, yea, sin of every kind ; is too plain to be denied, being matter of daily experience. And on this account it is, that St. Paul, speaking to those whom he had just before witnessed to be " in Christ Jesus," (1 Cor. i. 2, 9,) to have been " called of God into the fellowship" (or participation) " of his Son Jesus Christ ;" yet declares, " Brethren, I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." (1 Cor. iii. 1.) " Babes in Christ : " so we see they were " in Christ ;" they were believers in a low degree. And yet how much of sin remained in them ! of that " carnal mind, which is not subject to the law of God !"

6. And yet for all this, they are not condemned. Although they feel the flesh, the evil nature, in them ; although they are more sensible, day by day, that their " heart is deceitful and desperately wicked ;" yet, so long as they do not yield thereto ; so long as they give no place to the devil ; so long as they maintain a continual war with all sin, with pride, anger, desire, so that the flesh hath not dominion over them, but they still " walk after the Spirit ;" " there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." God is well-pleased with their sincere, though imperfect obedience ; and they " have confidence toward God," knowing they are his, " by the Spirit which he hath given" them. (1 John iii. 24.)

7 Nay, fourthly, although they are continually convicted of sin cleaving to all they do ; although they are

conscious of not fulfilling the perfect law, either in their thoughts, or words, or works; although they know they do not love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; although they feel more or less of pride, or self-will, stealing in and mixing with their best duties; although, even in their more immediate intercourse with God, when they assemble themselves with the great congregation, and when they pour out their souls in secret to Him who seeth all the thoughts and intents of the heart, they are continually ashamed of their wandering thoughts, or of the deadness and dullness of their affections; yet there is no condemnation to them still either from God or from their own heart. The consideration of these manifold defects only gives them a deeper sense that they have always need of that blood of sprinkling which speaks for them in the ears of God, and that Advocate with the Father "who ever liveth to make intercession for them." So far are these from driving them away from Him in whom they have believed, that they rather drive them the closer to Him whom they feel the want of every moment. And, at the same time, the deeper sense they have of this want, the more earnest desire do they feel, and the more diligent they are, as they "have received the Lord Jesus, so to walk in him."

8. They are not condemned, fifthly, for sins of infirmity, as they are usually called. Perhaps it were advisable, rather to call them *infirmities*, that we may not seem to give any countenance to sin, or to extenuate it in any degree, by thus coupling it with infirmity. But, (if we must retain so ambiguous and dangerous an expression,) by sins of infirmity I would mean such involuntary failings as the saying a thing we believe true, though, in fact, it prove to be false; or, the hurting our neighbour without knowing or designing it, perhaps when we designed to do him good. Though these are deviations from the holy, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, yet they are not properly sins, nor do they bring any guilt on the conscience of "them which are in Christ"

Jesus." They separate not between God and them, neither intercept the light of his countenance; as being no ways inconsistent with their general character of "walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

9. Lastly. "There is no condemnation" to them for any thing whatever, which it is not in their power to help; whether it be of an inward or outward nature, and whether it be doing something or leaving something undone. For instance, the Lord's supper is to be administered; but you do not partake thereof. Why do you not? You are confined by sickness: therefore you cannot help omitting it; and for the same reason you are not condemned. There is no guilt, because there is no choice. As there "is a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, not according to that he hath not."

10. A believer, indeed, may sometimes be *grieved*, because he cannot do what his soul longs for. He may cry out, when he is detained from worshipping God in the great congregation, "Like as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear in the presence of God?" He may earnestly desire (only still saying in his heart, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt,") to "go again with the multitude, and bring them forth into the house of God." But still, if he cannot go, he feels no condemnation, no guilt, no sense of God's displeasure; but can cheerfully yield up those desires with, "O my soul, put thy trust in God! for I will yet give him thanks, who is the help of my countenance and my God."

11. It is more difficult to determine concerning those which are usually styled sins of surprise; as when one who commonly in patience possesses his soul, on a sudden and violent temptation, speaks or acts in a manner not consistent with the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Perhaps it is not easy to fix a general rule concerning transgressions of this nature

We cannot say, either that men are, or that they are not, condemned for sins of surprise in general : but it seems, whenever a believer is by surprise overtaken in a fault, there is more or less condemnation, as there is more or less concurrence of his will. In proportion as a sinful desire, or word, or action is more or less voluntary, so we may conceive God is more or less displeased, and there is more or less guilt upon the soul.

12. But if so, then there may be some sins of surprise which bring much guilt and condemnation. For, in some instances, our being surprised is owing to some wilful and culpable neglect ; or to a sleepiness of soul which might have been prevented, or shaken off before the temptation came. A man may be previously warned, either of God or man, that trials and dangers are at hand ; and yet may say in his heart, "A little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to rest." Now, if such an one afterwards fall, though unawares, into the snare which he might have avoided,—that he fell unawares is no excuse ; he might have foreseen and have shunned the danger. The falling, even by surprise, in such an instance as this, is, in effect, a wilful sin : and, as such, must expose the sinner to condemnation, both from God and his own conscience.

13. On the other hand, there may be sudden assaults, either from the world, or the god of this world, and frequently from our own evil hearts, which we did not, and hardly could, foresee. And by these even a believer, while weak in faith, may possibly be borne down, suppose into a degree of anger, or thinking evil of another, with scarce any concurrence of his will. Now, in such a case, the jealous God would undoubtedly show him that he had done foolishly. He would be convinced of having swerved from the perfect law, from the mind which was in Christ, and, consequently, *grieved* with a godly sorrow, and lovingly *ashamed* before God. Yet need he not come into condemnation. God layeth not folly to his charge, but hath compassion upon him, "even as a father pitieth his own children." And his

heart condemneth him not : in the midst of that sorrow and shame, he can still say, "I will trust, and not be afraid ; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song ; he also is become my salvation."

III. 1. It remains only to draw some practical inferences from the preceding considerations.

And, first, if there be "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," and "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," on account of their past sin ; then why art thou fearful, O thou of little faith ? Though thy sins were once more in number than the sand, what is that to thee, now thou art in Christ Jesus ? "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth : who is he that condemneth ?" All the sins thou hast committed from thy youth up, until the hour when thou wast "accepted in the Beloved," are driven away as chaff, are gone, are lost, swallowed up, remembered no more. Thou art now "born of the Spirit:" wilt thou be troubled or afraid of what is done before thou wert born ? Away with thy fears ! Thou art not called to fear, but to the "spirit of love and of a sound mind." Know thy calling ! Rejoice in God thy Saviour, and give thanks to God thy Father through him !

2. Wilt thou say, "But I have again committed sin, since I had redemption through his blood ? And therefore it is, that 'I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.'" It is meet thou shouldst abhor thyself ; and it is God who hath wrought thee to this selfsame thing. But, dost thou now believe ? Hath he again enabled thee to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth ;" "and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God ?" Then that faith again cancels all that is past, and there is no condemnation to thee. At whatsoever time thou truly believest in the name of the Son of God, all thy sins, antecedent to that hour, vanish away as the morning dew. Now then, "stand thou fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free." He hath once more made thee free from

the power of sin, as well as from the guilt and punishment of it. Oh, "be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage!"—neither the vile, devilish bondage of sin, of evil desires, evil tempers, or words, or works, the most grievous yoke on this side hell; nor the bondage of slavish, tormenting fear, of guilt and self-condemnation.

3. But, secondly, do all they which abide "in Christ Jesus walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit?" Then we cannot but infer, that whosoever now committeth sin, hath no part or lot in this matter. He is even now condemned by his own heart. But, "if our heart condemn us," if our own conscience beareth witness that we are guilty, undoubtedly God doth; for "he is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things;" so that we cannot deceive him, if we can ourselves. And think not to say, "I was justified once; my sins were once forgiven me:" I know not that; neither will I dispute whether they were or no. Perhaps, at this distance of time, it is next to impossible to know, with any tolerable degree of certainty, whether that was a true, genuine work of God, or whether thou didst only deceive thy own soul. But this I know, with the utmost degree of certainty, "he that committeth sin is of the devil." Therefore, thou art of thy father the devil. It cannot be denied: for the works of thy father thou doest. Oh, flatter not thyself with vain hopes! Say not to thy soul, "Peace, peace!" For there is no peace. Cry aloud! Cry unto God out of the deep; if haply he may hear thy voice. Come unto him as at first, as wretched and poor, as sinful, miserable, blind, and naked! And beware thou suffer thy soul to take no rest, till his pardoning love be again revealed; till he "heal thy backslidings," and fill thee again with the "faith that worketh by love."

4. Thirdly. Is there no condemnation to them which "walk after the Spirit," by reason of *inward sin* still remaining, so long as they do not give way thereto; nor by reason of *sin cleaving* to all they do? Then

fret not thyself because of ungodliness, though it still remain in thy heart. Repine not, because thou still comest short of the glorious image of God; nor yet because pride, self-will, or unbelief cleave to all thy words and works. And be not afraid to know all this evil of thy heart; to know thyself as also thou art known. Yea, desire of God, that thou mayest not think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Let thy continual prayer be,

"Show me, as my soul can bear,  
The depth of inbred sin;  
All the unbelief declare,  
The pride that lurks within."

But when he heareth thy prayer, and uncoils thy heart; when he shows thee thoroughly what spirit thou art of; then beware that thy faith fail thee not, that thou suffer not thy shield to be torn from thee. Be abased. Be humbled in the dust. See thyself nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. But still "let not thy heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Still hold fast, "I, even I, have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." "And as the heavens are higher than the earth, so is his love higher than even my sins." Therefore God is merciful to thee a sinner! such a sinner as thou art! God is love; and Christ hath died! Therefore the Father himself loveth thee! Thou art his child! Therefore he will withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Is it good, that the whole body of sin, which is now crucified in thee, should be destroyed? It shall be done! Thou shalt be "cleansed from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit." Is it good, that nothing should remain in thy heart but the pure love of God alone? Be of good cheer! "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and mind, and soul, and strength." "Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it." It is thy part, patiently to continue in the work of faith, and in the labour of love, and in cheerful peace, in humble confidence, with *ca*me

and resigned and yet earnest expectation, to wait till the zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this.

5. Fourthly. If they that "are in Christ," and "walk after the Spirit," are not condemned for *sins of infirmity* as neither for *involuntary failings*, nor for any thing whatever which they are not able to help; then beware, O thou that hast faith in his blood, that Satan herein gain no advantage over thee. Thou art still foolish and weak, blind and ignorant; more weak than any words can express; more foolish than it can yet enter into thy heart to conceive; knowing nothing yet as thou oughtest to know. Yet let not all thy weakness and folly, or any fruit thereof, which thou art not yet able to avoid, shake thy faith, thy filial trust in God, or disturb thy peace or joy in the Lord. The rule which some give, as to wilful sins, and which, in that case, may perhaps be dangerous, is undoubtedly wise and safe, if it be applied only to the case of weakness and infirmities. Art thou fallen, O man of God? Yet, do not lie there, fretting thyself, and bemoaning thy weakness; but meekly say, "Lord, I shall fall thus every moment, unless thou uphold me with thy hand." And then arise! Leap and walk! Go on thy way! "Run with patience the race that is set before thee."

6. Lastly. Since a believer need not come into condemnation, even though he be *surprised* into what his soul abhors; (suppose his being surprised is not owing to any carelessness or wilful neglect of his own;) if thou who believest art thus overtaken in a fault, then grieve unto the Lord: it shall be a precious balm. Pour out thy heart before him, and show him of thy trouble; and pray with all thy might to Him who is "touched with the feeling of thy infirmities," that he would establish, and strengthen, and settle thy soul, and suffer thee to fall no more. But still he condemneth thee not. Wherefore shouldest thou fear? Thou hast no need of any "fear that hath torment." Thou shalt love him that loveth thee, and it sufficeth: more love will bring more strength. And, as soon as thou lovest him with

all thy heart, thou shalt be "perfect and entire, lacking nothing." Wait in peace for that hour when "the God of peace shall sanctify thee wholly, so that thy whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

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### QUESTIONS ON SERMON VIII.

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- Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What does St. Paul mean by "them that are in Christ Jesus?"
- Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Why is there no condemnation?
- Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Why has this sacrifice been misunderstood?
- Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What does he propose to show first?
- Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What is said of those who abide in Christ?
- Ques. 6. (I. 3.) From what do they abstain?
- Ques. 7. (I. 4.) How do they walk?
- Ques. 8. (I. 5.) What is said of their conversation?
- Ques. 9. (I. 6.) What is further said of them?
- Ques. 10. (II. I.) What is next proposed?
- Ques. 11. (II. 2.) What is said of the sense of guilt?
- Ques. 12. (II. 3.) Can a believer lose this sense of God's mercy?
- Ques. 13. (II. 4.) Why is he not condemned for present sins?
- Ques. 14. (II. 5.) What is said concerning inward sin?
- Ques. 15. (II. 6.) Do they still feel the evil nature?
- Ques. 16. (II. 7.) What is further said on this point?
- Ques. 17. (II. 8.) What is said of sins of infirmity? Are these properly called sins?
- Ques. 18. (II. 9.) Are any condemned for what they cannot help?
- Ques. 19. (II. 10.) Why may a believer be sometimes grieved?
- Ques. 20. (II. 11.) What is said of "sins of surprise?"
- Ques. 21. (II. 12.) May any of these bring a sense of guilt?

- Ques. 22. (II. 13.) What is said of sudden assaults?  
Ques. 23. (III. 1.) What is the first inference drawn?  
Ques. 24. (III. 2.) What is said of willful sin?  
Ques. 25. (III. 3.) What is the second inference?  
Ques. 26. (III. 4.) What is the third?  
Ques. 27. (III. 5.) What is the fourth?  
Ques. 28. (III. 6.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON IX.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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"IN this sermon," says Prof. Burwash, "we have very clearly presented the discriminating breadth of Mr. Wesley's analysis of the religious condition of mankind. While the classification of moral states is simple and exact, it recognizes in the probationary state *three* forms of moral condition, not *two* only, as will be the case when probation is ended. And it still further recognizes the fact that a man's position may be so uncertainly defined that he may vacillate between first and second or between second and third of these three. But the uncertainties and imperfections of the human will lead him to preach *no uncertain gospel*. He preaches the full standard of salvation, and in the name of his Master summons all men to meet its requirements. The special aspect of salvation presented in this sermon is the blessed privilege of freedom from the bondage of sin. Mr. Wesley understands this to be not an imputed or ideal freedom, but a real and moral freedom. This is enlarged in a subsequent discourse. This great truth he received from the Moravian Church. He says: 'When Peter Boehler, whom God had prepared for me as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ that it had those two fruits inseparably attending it, "dominion over sin and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness," I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel.' But when he had verified it by the word of God and in his own experience, he held and preached it henceforth as the truth of God. We shall see, however, in the thirteenth and fourteenth sermons

how he guarded this important truth against one-sided interpretations put upon it by the Moravians. Except among a few of the profounder mystics, this truth had been lost to the view of the Christian Church ever since the apostolic and primitive age, and Mr. Wesley regarded its restoration as one of the special ends for which God raised up Methodism."

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON IX.

Three moral states are here implied: the natural man, the man under the law, and the man under grace.

I. The natural man is asleep, secure, ignorant of himself, walks in fancied joy and liberty, is the willing servant of sin.

II. The man under the law is awakened, sees the breadth of God's law and his own sin, feels the anguish of a wounded spirit, struggles against his chains, but in vain, and is described in the seventh chapter of Romans.

III. The man under grace has received the Spirit of adoption, sees God's love; freed from the guilt and power of sin, is become the servant of righteousness.

*Summary.* The first neither fears nor loves God, has false peace and fancied liberty, sins willingly, and neither fights nor conquers; the second fears but does not love God, walks in the painful light of hell, has no peace, lives in bondage, sins unwillingly, and fights, but does not conquer; the third loves God, walks in the light of heaven, has the true peace and liberty of God's children, sinneth not, and is more than conqueror.

#### IV. Lessons.

1. Sincerity is not sufficient. 2. These states are sometimes mingled. 3. A man may go far, and yet be only in a legal state. 4. Let us not rest short of the best things.

## SERMON IX.

THE SPIRIT OF BONDAGE AND OF  
ADOPTION.

*"Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."*—ROMANS viii. 15.

1. ST. PAUL here speaks to those who are the children of God by faith. "Ye," saith he, who are indeed his children, have drunk into his Spirit; "ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear;" but, 'because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.' "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

2. The spirit of bondage and fear is widely distant from this loving Spirit of adoption: those who are influenced only by slavish fear cannot be termed "the sons of God;" yet some of them may be styled his servants, and are "not far from the kingdom of heaven."

3. But it is to be feared, the bulk of mankind, yea, of what is called the Christian world, have not attained even this; but are still afar off, "neither is God in all their thoughts." A few names may be found of those who love God; a few more there are that fear him; but the greater part have neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor the love of God in their hearts.

4. Perhaps most of you, who, by the mercy of God, now partake of a better spirit, may remember the time when ye were as they, when ye were under the same condemnation. But at first ye knew it not, though ye were wallowing daily in your sins and in your blood; till, in due time, ye "received the spirit of fear," (*ye received*, for this is also the gift of God;) and after-

wards, fear vanished away, and the Spirit of love filled your hearts.

5. One who is in the first state of mind, without fear or love, is in Scripture termed a "natural man:" one who is under the spirit of bondage and fear, is sometimes said to be "under the law;" (although that expression more frequently signifies one who is under the Jewish dispensation, or who thinks himself obliged to observe all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law;) but one who has exchanged the spirit of fear for the Spirit of love is properly said to be "under grace."

Now, because it highly imports us to know what spirit we are of, I shall endeavour to point out distinctly, first, the state of a "natural man;" secondly, that of one who is "under the law;" and, thirdly, of one who is "under grace."

I. 1. And, first, the state of a *natural man*. This the Scripture represents as a state of sleep: the voice of God to him is, "Awake, thou that sleepest." For his soul is in a deep sleep: his spiritual senses are not awake: they discern neither spiritual good nor evil. The eyes of his understanding are closed; they are sealed together, and see not. Clouds and darkness continually rest upon them; for he lies in the valley of the shadow of death. Hence, having no inlets for the knowledge of spiritual things, all the avenues of his soul being shut up, he is in gross, stupid ignorance of whatever he is most concerned to know. He is utterly ignorant of God, knowing nothing concerning him as he ought to know. He is totally a stranger to the law of God, as to its true, inward, spiritual meaning. He has no conception of that evangelical holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; nor of the happiness which they only find whose "life is hid with Christ in God."

2. And, for this very reason, because he is fast asleep, he is, in some sense, at rest. Because he is blind, he is also secure: he saith, "Tush, there shall no harm happen unto me." The darkness which covers him on every side keeps him in a kind of peace; so far as

peace can consist with the works of the devil, and with an earthly, devilish mind. He *sees* not that he stands on the edge of the pit; therefore he *fears* it not. He cannot *tremble* at the danger he does not *know*. He has not understanding enough to fear. Why is it that he is in no dread of God? Because he is totally ignorant of him: if not saying in his heart, "There is no God;" or, that "he sitteth on the circle of the heavens, and humbleth" not "himself to behold the things which are done on earth;" yet satisfying himself as well, to all Epicurean intents and purposes, by saying, "God is merciful;" confounding and swallowing up all at once in that unwieldy idea of mercy, all his holiness and essential hatred of sin; all his justice, wisdom, and truth. He is in no dread of the vengeance denounced against those who obey not the blessed law of God, because he understands it not. He imagines the main point is, to *do thus*, to be *outwardly* blameless; and sees not that it extends to every temper, desire, thought, motion of the heart. Or, he fancies that the obligation hereto is ceased; that Christ came to "destroy the Law and the Prophets;" to save his people *in*, not *from*, their sins; to bring them to heaven without holiness:— notwithstanding his own words, "Not one jot or tittle of the law shall pass away, till all things are fulfilled;" and, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

3. He is secure, because he is utterly ignorant of himself. Hence he talks of "repenting by and by;" he does not indeed exactly know when, but some time or other before he dies; taking it for granted, that this is quite in his own power. For what should hinder his doing it, if he will? If he does but once set a resolution, no fear but he will make it good!

4. But this ignorance never so strongly glares, as in those who are termed *men of learning*. If a natural man be one of these, he can talk at large of his rational faculties, of the freedom of his will, and the absolute

necessity of such freedom, in order to constitute man a moral agent. He reads, and argues, and proves to a demonstration, that every man may do as he will; may dispose his own heart to evil or good, as it seems best in his own eyes. Thus the god of this world spreads a double veil of blindness over his heart, lest, by any means, "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine" upon it.

5. From the same ignorance of himself and God, there may sometimes arise, in the natural man, a kind of *joy*, in congratulating himself upon his own wisdom and goodness: and what the world calls joy, he may often possess. He may have pleasure in various kinds; either in gratifying the desires of the flesh, or the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; particularly if he has large possessions; if he enjoy an affluent fortune; then he may "clothe" himself "in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day." And so long as he thus doeth well unto himself, men will doubtless speak good of him. They will say, "He is a happy man." For, indeed, this is the sum of worldly happiness; to dress, and visit, and talk, and eat, and drink, and rise up to play.

6. It is not surprising, if one in such circumstances as these, dosed with the opiates of flattery and sin, should imagine, among his other waking dreams, that he walks in great *liberty*. How easily may he persuade himself, that he is at liberty from all *vulgar errors*, and from the *prejudice* of education; judging exactly right, and keeping clear of all extremes! "I am free," may he say, "from all the *enthusiasm* of weak and narrow souls; from *superstition*, the disease of fools and cowards, always righteous overmuch; and from *bigotry*, continually incident to those who have not a free and generous way of thinking." And too sure it is, that he is altogether free from the "wisdom which cometh from above," from holiness, from the religion of the heart, from the whole mind which was in Christ.

7. For all this time he is the servant of sin. He

commits sin, more or less, day by day. Yet he is not troubled, he "is in no bondage," as some speak; he feels no condemnation. He contents himself (even though he should profess to believe that the Christian Revelation is of God) with, "Man is frail. We are all weak. Every man has his infirmity." Perhaps he quotes Scripture: "Why, does not Solomon say, The righteous man falls into sin seven times a day? And, doubtless, they are all hypocrites or enthusiasts who pretend to be better than their neighbours." If, at any time, a serious thought fix upon him, he stifles it as soon as possible, with, "Why should I fear, since God is merciful, and Christ died for sinners?" Thus, he remains a willing servant of sin, content with the bondage of corruption; inwardly and outwardly unholy, and satisfied therewith; not only not conquering sin, but not striving to conquer, particularly that sin which doth so easily beset him.

8. Such is the state of every *natural man*; whether he be a gross, scandalous transgressor, or a more reputable and decent sinner, having the form, though not the power of godliness. But how can such an one be *convinced of sin*? How is he brought to *repent*? to be *under the law*? to receive the *spirit of bondage unto fear*? This is the point which is next to be considered.

II. 1. By some awful providence, or by his word applied with the demonstration of his Spirit, God touches the heart of him that lay asleep in darkness and in the shadow of death. He is terribly shaken out of his sleep, and awakes into a consciousness of his danger. Perhaps in a moment, perhaps by degrees, the eyes of his understanding are opened, and now first (the veil being in part removed) discern the real state he is in. Horrid light breaks in upon his soul; such light as may be conceived to gleam from the bottomless pit, from the lowest deep, from a lake of fire burning with brimstone. He at last sees the loving, the merciful God it also "a consuming fire;" that he is a just God and a terrible, rendering to every man according to his works. entering

into judgment with the ungodly for every idle word, yea, and for the imaginations of the heart. He now clearly perceives, that the great and holy God is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" that he is an avenger of every one who rebelleth against him, and repayeth the wicked to his face; and that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

2. The inward, spiritual meaning of the law of God now begins to glare upon him. He perceives "the commandment is exceeding broad," and there is "nothing hid from the light thereof." He is convinced, that every part of it relates, not barely to outward sin or obedience, but to what passes in the secret recesses of the soul, which no eye but God's can penetrate. If he now hears, "Thou shalt not kill," God speaks in thunder, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer;" "He that saith unto his brother, Thou fool, is obnoxious to hell-fire." If the law say, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," the voice of the Lord sounds in his ears, "He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And thus, in every point, he feels the word of God "quick and powerful, sharper than a two-edged sword." It "pierces even to the dividing asunder of his soul and spirit, his joints and marrow." And so much the more, because he is conscious to himself of having neglected so great salvation; of having "trodden under foot the Son of God," who would have saved him from his sins, and "counted the blood of the covenant an unholy," a common, unsanctifying "thing."

3. And as he knows, "all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do," so he sees himself naked, stripped of all the fig-leaves which he had sewed together, of all his poor pretences to religion or virtue, and his wretched excuses for sinning against God. He now sees himself like the ancient sacrifices, *τετραχλισμενον*, *cleft in sunder*, as it were, from the neck downward, so that all within him stands confessed. His heart is bare, and he sees it is all sin, "de-

ceitful above all things, desperately wicked ;" that it is altogether corrupt and abominable, more than it is possible for tongue to express ; that there dwelleth therein no good thing, but unrighteousness and ungodliness only ; every motion thereof, every temper and thought, being only evil continually.

4. And he not only sees, but feels in himself, by an emotion of soul which he cannot describe, that for the sins of his heart, were his life without blame, (which yet it is not, and cannot be ; seeing "an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit,") he deserves to be cast into the fire that never shall be quenched. He feels that "the wages," the just reward, "of sin," of his sin above all, "is death ;" even the second death ; the death which dieth not ; the destruction of body and soul in hell.

5. Here ends his pleasing dream, his delusive rest, his false peace, his vain security. His joy now vanishes as a cloud ; pleasures, once loved, delight no more. They pall upon the taste : he loathes the nauseous sweet ; he is weary to bear them. The shadows of happiness flee away, and sink into oblivion : so that he is stripped of all, and wanders to and fro, seeking rest, but finding none.

6. The fumes of those opiates being now dispelled, he feels the anguish of a wounded spirit. He finds that sin let loose upon the soul (whether it be pride, anger, or evil desire, whether self-will, malice, envy, revenge, or any other) is perfect misery : he feels sorrow of heart for the blessings he has lost, and the curse which is come upon him ; remorse for having thus destroyed himself, and despised his own mercies ; fear, from a lively sense of the wrath of God, and of the consequences of his wrath, of the punishment which he has justly deserved, and which he sees hanging over his head ;—fear of death, as being to him the gate of hell, the entrance of death eternal ;—fear of the devil, the executioner of the wrath and righteous vengeance of God ;—fear of men, who, if they were able to kill his body, would thereby plunge both body and soul into

hell;—fear, sometimes arising to such a height, that the poor, sinful, guilty soul is terrified with every thing, with nothing, with shades, with a leaf shaken of the wind. Yea, sometimes it may even border upon distraction, making a man “drunken though not with wine,” suspending the exercise of the memory, of the understanding, of all the natural faculties. Sometimes it may approach to the very brink of despair; so that he who trembles at the name of death may yet be ready to plunge into it every moment, to “choose strangling rather than life.” Well may such a man roar, like him of old, for the very disquietness of his heart. Well may he cry out, “The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear?”

7. Now he truly desires to break loose from sin, and begins to struggle with it. But though he strive with all his might, he cannot conquer: sin is mightier than he. He would fain escape; but he is so fast in prison, that he cannot get forth. He resolves against sin, but yet sins on: he sees the snare, and abhors and runs into it. So much does his boasted reason avail,—only to enhance his guilt, and increase his misery! Such is the freedom of his will; free only to evil; free to “drink in iniquity like water;” to wander farther and farther from the living God, and do more “despite to the Spirit of grace!”

8. The more he strives, wishes, labours to be free, the more does he feel his chains, the grievous chains of sin, wherewith Satan binds and “leads him captive at his will;” his servant he is, though he repine ever so much; though he rebel, he cannot prevail. He is still in bondage and fear, by reason of sin; generally, of some outward sin, to which he is peculiarly disposed, either by nature, custom, or outward circumstances; but always, of some inward sin, some evil temper or unholy affection. And the more he frets against it, the more it prevails; he may bite, but cannot break his chain. Thus he toils without end, repenting and sinning, and repenting and sinning again, till at length the poor, sin-

ful, helpless wretch is even at his wit's end, and can barely groan, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

9. This whole struggle of one who is "under the law," under the "spirit of fear and bondage," is beautifully described by the apostle in the foregoing chapter, speaking in the person of an awakened man. "I," saith he, "was alive without the law once:" (verse 9:) I had much life, wisdom, strength, and virtue; so I thought. "But when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died:" when the commandment, in its spiritual meaning, came to my heart, with the power of God, my inbred sin was stirred up, fretted, inflamed, and all my virtue died away. "And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me:" (verses 10, 11:) it came upon me unawares; slew all my hopes; and plainly showed, in the midst of life I was in death. "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good:" (verse 12:) I no longer lay the blame on this, but on the corruption of my own heart. I acknowledge that "the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin:" (verse 14:) I now see both the spiritual nature of the law; and my own carnal, devilish heart "sold under sin," totally enslaved: (like slaves bought with money, who were absolutely at their master's disposal:)—"for that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do:" (verse 15:) such is the bondage under which I groan; such the tyranny of my hard master. "To will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do:" (verses 18, 19:) "I find a law," an inward, constraining power, "that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in," or consent to, "the law of God, after the inward man:" (verses 21, 22:) in my "mind:" (so the apostle explains himself in the words that immediately follow; and so o 100

ἑνθερωπος, the inward man, is understood in all other Greek writers:—"but I see another law in my members," another constraining power, "warring against the law of my mind," or inward man, "and bringing me into captivity to the law" or power "of sin:" (verse 23:) dragging me, as it were, at my conqueror's chariot-wheels, into the very thing which my soul abhors. "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (verse 24.) Who shall deliver me from this helpless, dying life, from this bondage of sin and misery? Till this is done, "I myself" (or rather, *that I, αὐτός εἰμι*, that man I am now personating) "with the mind," or inward man, "serve the law of God;" my mind, my conscience is on God's side: "but with my flesh," with my body, "the law of sin," (verse 25,) being hurried away by a force I cannot resist.

10. How lively a portraiture is this of one "under the law!" one who feels the burden he cannot shake off; who pants after liberty, power, and love, but is in fear and bondage still! until the time that God answers the wretched man, crying out, "Who shall deliver me" from this bondage of sin, from this body of death?—"The grace of God through Jesus Christ thy Lord."

III. 1. Then it is that this miserable bondage ends; and he is no more "under the law, but under grace." This state we are, thirdly, to consider; the state of one who has found *grace* or favour in the sight of God, even the Father, and who has the *grace* or power of the Holy Ghost reigning in his heart; who has received, in the language of the apostle, the "Spirit of adoption, whereby" he now cries, "Abba, Father!"

2. "He cried unto the Lord in his trouble, and God delivers him out of his distress." His eyes are opened in quite another manner than before, even to see a loving, gracious God. While he is calling, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!"—he hears a voice in his inmost soul. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord: I will"

be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy." And it is not long before "the Lord descends in the cloud, and proclaims the name of the Lord." Then he sees, but not with eyes of flesh and blood, "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, and forgiving iniquities, and transgressions, and sin."

3. Heavenly, healing light now breaks in upon his soul. He "looks on Him whom he had pierced;" and "God, who out of darkness commanded light to shine, shineth in his heart." He sees the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. He hath a divine "evidence of things not seen" by sense, even of "the deep things of God;" more particularly of the love of God, of his pardoning love to him that believes in Jesus. Overpowered with the sight, his whole soul cries out, "My Lord, and my God!" For he sees all his iniquities laid on Him who "bare them in his own body on the tree:" he beholds the Lamb of God taking away his sins. How clearly now does he discern that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; making Him sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God through Him;"—and that he himself is reconciled to God, by that blood of the covenant!

4. Here end both the guilt and power of sin. He can now say, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh," (even in this mortal body,) "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Here end remorse, and sorrow of heart, and the anguish of a wounded spirit. "God turneth his heaviness into joy." He made sore, and now his hands bind up. Here ends also that bondage unto fear; for "his heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord." He cannot fear any longer the wrath of God; for he knows it is now turned away from him, and looks upon Him no more as an angry Judge, but as

a loving Father. He cannot fear the devil, knowing he has "no power, except it be given him from above." He fears not hell; being an heir of the kingdom of heaven: consequently, he has no fear of death; by reason whereof he was in time past, for so many years, "subject to bondage." Rather, knowing that "if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, he hath a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; he groaneth earnestly, desiring to be clothed upon with that house which is from heaven." He groans to shake off this house of earth, that "mortality" may be "swallowed up of life;" knowing that God "hath wrought him for the selfsame thing; who hath also given him the earnest of his Spirit."

5. And "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" liberty, not only from guilt and fear, but from sin, from that heaviest of all yokes, that basest of all bondage. His labour is not now in vain. The snare is broken, and he is delivered. He not only strives, but likewise prevails; he not only fights, but conquers also. "Henceforth he does not serve sin." (Chap. vi. 6, &c.) He is "dead unto sin, and alive unto God;" "sin doth not now reign" even "in his mortal body," nor doth he "obey it in the desires thereof." He does not "yield his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God." For "being now made free from sin, he is become the servant of righteousness."

6. Thus "having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," and having power over all sin, over every evil desire, and temper, and word, and work, he is a living witness of the "glorious liberty of the sons of God;" all of whom, being partakers of like precious faith, bear record with one voice, "We have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!"

7. It is this Spirit which continually "worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It is he that sheds the love of God abroad in their hearts.

and the love of all mankind; thereby purifying their hearts from the love of the world, from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. It is by him they are delivered from anger and pride, from all vile and inordinate affections. In consequence, they are delivered from evil words and works, from all unholiness of conversation, doing no evil to any child of man, and being zealous of all good works.

8. To sum up all: The *natural* man neither fears nor loves God; one *under the law*, fears,—one *under grace*, loves him. The first has no light in the things of God, but walks in utter darkness; the second sees the painful light of hell; the third, the joyous light of heaven. He that sleeps in death has a false peace; he that is awakened has no peace at all; he that believes has true peace,—the peace of God filling and ruling his heart. The heathen, baptized or unbaptized, hath a fancied liberty, which is indeed licentiousness; the Jew, or one under the Jewish dispensation, is in heavy, grievous bondage; the Christian enjoys the true, glorious liberty of the sons of God. An unawakened child of the devil sins willingly; one that is awakened sins unwillingly; a child of God “sinneth not,” but “keepeth himself, and the wicked one toucheth him not.” To conclude: the natural man neither conquers nor fights; the man under the law fights with sin but cannot conquer; the man under grace fights and conquers, yea, is “more than conqueror through Him that loveth him.”

IV. 1. From this plain account of the threefold state of man, the *natural*, the *legal*, and the *evangelical*, it appears that it is not sufficient to divide mankind into sincere and insincere. A man may be sincere in any of these states; not only when he has the “Spirit of adoption,” but while he has the “spirit of bondage unto fear;” yea, while he has neither this fear, nor love. For, undoubtedly, there may be sincere heathens, as well as sincere Jews or Christians. This circumstance, then, does by no means prove that a man is in a state of acceptance with God.

“Examine yourselves, therefore,” not only whether ye are sincere, but “whether ye be in the faith.” Examine narrowly, (for it imports you much,) what is the ruling principle in your soul? Is it the love of God? Is it the fear of God? Or is it neither one nor the other? Is it not rather the love of the world? the love of pleasure or gain? of ease or reputation? If so, you are not come so far as a Jew. You are but a heathen still. Have you heaven in your heart? Have you the Spirit of adoption, ever crying, Abba, Father? Or do you cry unto God, as “out of the belly of hell,” overwhelmed with sorrow and fear? Or are you a stranger to this whole affair, and cannot imagine what I mean? Heathen, pull off the mask! Thou hast never put on Christ! Stand barefaced! Look up to heaven; and own before Him that liveth for ever and ever, thou hast no part either among the sons or servants of God!

Whosoever thou art, dost thou commit sin, or dost thou not? If thou dost, is it willingly or unwillingly? In either case, God hath told thee whose thou art: “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” If thou committest it willingly, thou art his faithful servant: he will not fail to reward thy labour. If unwillingly, still thou art his servant. God deliver thee out of his hands!

Art thou daily fighting against all sin? and daily more than conqueror? I acknowledge thee for a child of God. Oh, stand fast in thy glorious liberty! Art thou fighting, but not conquering? striving for the mastery, but not able to attain? Then thou art not yet a believer in Christ; but follow on, and thou shalt know the Lord. Art thou not fighting at all, but leading an easy, indolent, fashionable life? Oh, how hast thou dared to name the name of Christ, only to make it a reproach among the heathen? Awake, thou sleeper! Call upon thy God, before the deep swallow thee up!

2. Perhaps one reason why so many think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, why they

do not discern what state they are in, is, because these several states of soul are often mingled together, and in some measure meet in one and the same person. Thus experience shows, that the legal state, or state of fear, is frequently mixed with the natural; for few men are so fast asleep in sin, but they are sometimes more or less awakened. As the Spirit of God does not "wait for the call of man," so, at some times, he *will* be heard. He puts them in fear, so that, for a season, at least, the heathen "know themselves to be but men." They feel the burden of sin, and earnestly desire to flee from the wrath to come. But not long: they seldom suffer the arrows of conviction to go deep into their souls; but quickly stifle the grace of God, and return to their wallowing in the mire.

In like manner, the evangelical state, or state of love, is frequently mixed with the legal. For few of those who have the spirit of bondage and fear remain always without hope. The wise and gracious God rarely suffers this; "for he remembereth that we are but dust;" and he willeth not that "the flesh should fail before him, or the spirit which he hath made." Therefore, at such times as he seeth good, he gives a dawning of light unto them that sit in darkness. He causes a part of his goodness to pass before them, and shows that he is a "God that heareth the prayer." They see the promise, which is by faith in Christ Jesus, though it be yet afar off; and hereby they are encouraged to "run with patience the race which is set before them."

3. Another reason why many deceive themselves, is, because they do not consider how far a man may go, and yet be in a natural, or, at best, a legal state. A man may be of a compassionate and a benevolent temper; he may be affable, courteous, generous, friendly; he may have some degree of meekness, patience, temperance, and of many other moral virtues. He may feel many desires of shaking off all vice, and of attaining higher degrees of virtue. He may abstain from much

evil; perhaps from all that is grossly contrary to justice, mercy, or truth. He may do much good, may feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the widow and fatherless. He may attend public worship, use prayer in private, read many books of devotion; and yet for all this he may be a mere natural man, knowing neither himself nor God; equally a stranger to the spirit of fear, and to that of love; having neither repented, nor believed the gospel.

But suppose there were added to all this a deep conviction of sin, with much fear of the wrath of God; vehement desires to cast off every sin, and to fulfil all righteousness; frequent rejoicing in hope, and touches of love often glancing upon the soul; yet neither do these prove a man to be *under grace*, to have true, living, Christian faith, unless the Spirit of adoption abide in his heart; unless he can continually cry, "Abba, Father!"

4. Beware, then, thou who art called by the name of Christ, that thou come not short of the mark of thy high calling. Beware thou rest not, either in a natural state, with too many that are accounted *good Christians*; or in a legal state, wherein those who are highly esteemed of men are generally content to live and die. Nay, but God hath prepared better things for thee, if thou follow on till thou attain. Thou art not called to fear and tremble, like devils; but to rejoice and love, like the angels of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Thou shalt "rejoice evermore;" thou shalt "pray without ceasing;" thou shalt "in every thing give thanks." Thou shalt do the will of God on earth as it is done in heaven. Oh, prove thou "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God!" Now present thyself a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." "Whereunto thou hast already attained, hold fast," by "reaching forth unto those things which are before;" until "the God of

peace make thee perfect in every good work, working in thee that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever! Amen!"

## HYMN.

HAPPY soul, who sees the day,  
 The glad day of gospel grace!  
 Thee, my Lord, (thou then wilt say,)  
 Thee will I for ever praise;  
 Though thy wrath against me burn'd,  
 Thou dost comfort me again;  
 All thy wrath aside is turn'd,  
 Thou hast blotted out my sin.

Me, behold! thy mercy spares;  
 Jesus my salvation is;  
 Hence my doubts; away my fears;  
 Jesus is become my peace:  
**JAH, JEHOVAH**, is my Lord,  
 Ever merciful and just;  
 I will lean upon his word;  
 I will on his promise trust.

Strong I am, for he is strong;  
 Just in righteousness divine:  
 He is my triumphal song;  
 All he has, and is, is mine.

*Mine*—and *yours*, whoe'er believe ;  
 On his name whoe'er shall call,  
**Frecly** shall his grace receive ;  
 He is full of grace for all.

Therefore shall ye draw with joy  
 Water from salvation's well ;  
**Praise** shall your glad tongues employ,  
 While his streaming grace ye feel  
**Each** to each ye then shall say,  
 "Sinners, call upon his name ;  
**Oh**, rejoice to see his day ;  
 See it, and his praise proclaim !"

Glory to his name belongs,  
 Great, and marvellous, and high :  
**Sing** unto the Lord your songs,  
 Cry to every nation, cry !  
**Wondrous** things the Lord hath done,  
 Excellent his name we find ;  
**This** to all mankind is known,  
 Be it known to all mankind !

Sion, shout thy Lord and King,  
 Israel's **HOLY ONE** is He !  
**Give** him thanks, rejoice and sing,  
 Great is He, and dwells in **thee**  
**Oh**, the grace unsearchable !  
 While eternal ages roll,  
**God** delights in man to dwell,  
 Soul of each believing soul !

### QUESTIONS ON SERMON IX.

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- Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) Of whom is St. Paul speaking in this text?
- Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) What is said of the spirit of bondage and fear?
- Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Have all mankind possessed even this?
- Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) What appeal does he make to his hearers?
- Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What is one called in Scripture who has neither fear nor love?
- Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What is said of the natural man?
- Ques. 7. (I. 2.) What is his state, being asleep in sin?
- Ques. 8. (I. 3.) Does he know himself?
- Ques. 9. (I. 4.) What is said of men of learning?
- Ques. 10. (I. 5.) Does he sometimes have a kind of joy?
- Ques. 11. (I. 6.) What is said of his liberty?
- Ques. 12. (I. 7.) Does he feel condemnation for sin?
- Ques. 13. (I. 8.) What extremes are mentioned in this class?
- Ques. 14. (II. 1.) How does he become awakened?
- Ques. 15. (II. 2.) What effect does the law of God now have?
- Ques. 16. (II. 3.) How does he see himself now?
- Ques. 17. (II. 4.) Does he feel himself worthy of condemnation?
- Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What comes to an end in his experience?
- Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What is said of his wounded spirit?
- Ques. 20. (II. 7.) What effect has this upon his conduct?
- Ques. 21. (II. 8.) What is the result of this struggle?
- Ques. 22. (II. 9.) How does the apostle describe it? Does

the seventh of Romans describe an awakened but unregenerate man? *Ans.* So Mr. Wesley teaches.

Ques. 23. (III. 1.) How does this bondage end, and when?

Ques. 24. (III. 2.) What follows when his eyes are opened?

Ques. 25. (III. 3.) What does he now see?

Ques. 26. (III. 4.) What consequence is here mentioned?

Ques. 27. (III. 5.) What is said of his liberty?

Ques. 28. (III. 6.) What follows the sense of peace with God?

Ques. 29. (III. 7.) How and by whom are these results produced?

Ques. 30. (III. 8.) What summary is here given?

Ques. 31. (IV. 1.) What is said of the threefold state of man?

Ques. 32. (IV. 2.) Why do some think too highly of themselves?

Ques. 33. (IV. 3.) What other reason is given?

Ques. 34. (IV. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON X.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THE doctrine of the witness of the Spirit may be said in a special sense to be peculiar to Methodism. Not because it has not been taught in some measure by others, but because it has been more fully explained, more thoroughly guarded, and more specially emphasized by Methodists than by any other Christian teachers. Mr. Wesley proved beyond question that the Christian writers of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries taught this doctrine. He quoted the works of Origen, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Augustine, and Bernard several hundred years later than Augustine. Luther, Melancthon, and the "Homilies of the Church of England" furnished him with abundant proofs.

But while the main features of this great scriptural truth may be found in the works of the early as well as of the later theologians, there is a manifest defect in their expositions. One cannot fail to observe, in reading them, the absence of earnestness of conviction, which results from the lack of experimental knowledge of the truth that is expounded. As a part of divine revelation, as inseparable from the doctrines of the apostles, it is accepted and taught, but there is no special emphasis laid upon it as a *vital* truth. In other words, their teaching is speculative rather than practical.

Mr. Wesley received this doctrine from the Moravians, notwithstanding it was contained in the doctrinal standards of his own Church. But when his mind was fully awakened to its importance he no longer followed the Moravian guides,

but turned to the Scriptures with that thorough and tireless energy which characterized him. There, in the word of God, he saw the glorious truth; and in the same volume he found those principles which enabled him to defend it, whether assaulted by open foes or corrupted by short-sighted friends.

He does not assert that the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is essential to those who are ignorant of this gospel privilege, for it is possible that the substance may be enjoyed without the recognition of the name of this blessing. He does contend, however, that to those to whom the doctrine is clearly and intelligently preached it is essential to the development of inward and outward holiness. In his own experience, however, as in that of others, he saw the necessity of adhering closely to the inspired account of this as of all other doctrines of the gospel. The controversies into which the advocacy of this truth led him continued almost to the end of his life, for the adversaries were numerous, and fanaticism and enthusiasm gave him as much to do as those who stoutly rejected the plain teachings of the Bible.

On one hand it was admitted that a Christian might have a reasonable assurance of salvation, but this assurance was the product of the human reason only. If a man by self-examination could satisfy himself that he was endeavoring to conform his mind and habits to the requirements of the word of God, charitably construed, they argued that this reasonable conviction of sincerity, coupled with a moral and harmless life, fully met all the demands of Christian hope and all the promises contained in the Scriptures. On the other hand, accepting the doctrine in all its length and breadth, there were many among the Moravians, Count Zinzendorf among them, who preached a sinless perfection of the most extreme kind; and finally their teaching ended in Antinomianism of the most destructive type. As we shall presently see, Mr. Wesley was compelled to join issue with the latter class of false teachers, as vigorously contending with them as he had ear-

nestly resisted the former, who denied the doctrine of a divine witness.

It is not the least of the testimonies to the conservatism of Mr. Wesley's theology that he was opposed by extremists of all classes. By the formalists he was called an "enthusiast" and by the fanatics a "legalist," so that it is clearly to be seen that he was neither the one nor the other; but from the subject of experimental knowledge of the forgiveness of sins and of the witness of the Spirit he could not be driven by the ridicule of one party nor the extravagance of the other. "I am acquainted with more than twelve or thirteen hundred persons," he says, "whom I believe to be truly pious, and not on slight grounds, and who have severally testified to me with their own mouths that they *do know* the day when the love of God was first shed abroad in their hearts and when his Spirit first witnessed with their spirits that they were the children of God." To his praise be it said that he was just as ready to listen to the experience of a Kingswood collier or of a London cobbler as that of a peer of the realm or of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He knew no man after the flesh wherever the gospel was concerned; and when the testimony of others corresponded so vividly with his own, he did not hesitate to declare what he believed and *felt* to be true.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON X.

The mistakes of enthusiasm on this subject. The mistakes of reason in the opposite direction.

##### I. The nature of the witness.

1. Of our own spirit. It must not supplant the testimony of God's Spirit. Its foundation is laid in the scriptural marks of the child of God. Conscience testifies that we have these marks. Hence assurance that we are children of God.

2. Of God's Spirit. "An inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit

that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

This testimony of God's Spirit precedes that of our own spirit. The Spirit of God operates even in the testimony of our own spirit.

The full assurance is as certain as the truth of Scripture and the self-evidence of our own conscience, but based upon a *divine* evidence communicated *supernaturally*.

II. How can this joint testimony be distinguished from the presumption of a natural mind and from the delusion of the devil?

1. By its antecedents, conviction of sin and repentance.
2. By the accompanying change. The true witness is followed by humility, delusion by pride; the true brings fruits of holiness, the false indulges sin.
3. To conscience rightly disposed the true witness is self-evidencing.
4. The consciousness of the fruits in the testimony of our own spirit assures us that we have not mistaken the voice of the Divine Spirit.

## SERMON X.

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

## DISCOURSE I.

*"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."*—Rom. viii. 16.

1. How many vain men, not understanding what they spake, neither whereof they affirmed, have wrested this scripture to the great loss, if not the destruction, of their souls! How many have mistaken the voice of their own imagination for this witness of the Spirit of God, and thence idly presumed they were the children of God, while they were doing the works of the devil! These are truly and properly enthusiasts; and, indeed, in the worst sense of the word. But with what difficulty are they convinced thereof, especially if they have drunk deep into that spirit of error! All endeavours to bring them to the knowledge of themselves, they will then account fighting against God; and that vehemence and impetuosity of spirit, which they call "contending earnestly for the faith," sets them so far above all the usual methods of conviction, that we may well say, "With men it is impossible."

2. Who then can be surprised, if many reasonable men, seeing the dreadful effects of this delusion, and labouring to keep at the utmost distance from it, should sometimes lean toward another extreme?—if they are not forward to believe any who speak of having this witness, concerning which others have so grievously erred?—if they are almost ready to set all down for enthusiasts who use the expressions which have been se

terribly abused? yea, if they should question whether the witness or testimony here spoken of be the privilege of *ordinary* Christians, and not, rather, one of those *extraordinary* gifts which they suppose belonged only to the apostolic age?

3. But is there any necessity laid upon us of running either into one extreme or the other? May we not steer a middle course,—keep a sufficient distance from that spirit of error and enthusiasm, without denying the gift of God, and giving up the great privilege of his children? Surely we may. In order thereto, let us consider, in the presence and fear of God,

First, What is this witness or testimony of our spirit; what is the testimony of God's Spirit; and, how does he "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?"

Secondly, How is this joint testimony of God's Spirit and our own, clearly and solidly distinguished from the presumption of a natural mind, and from the delusion of the devil?

I. 1. Let us first consider, what is the witness or testimony of our spirit. But here I cannot but desire all those who are for swallowing up the testimony of the Spirit of God in the rational testimony of our own spirit, to observe, that in this text the apostle is so far from speaking of the testimony of our own spirit *only*, that it may be questioned whether he speaks of it *at all*,—whether he does not speak *only* of the testimony of God's Spirit? It does not appear but the original text may be fairly understood thus. The apostle had just said, in the preceding verse, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" and immediately subjoins, *Αὐτο το πνευματι ημων, οτι εσμεν τέκνα Θεου* (*πνευμα*) *συμμαρτυρει το πνευματι ημων, οτι εσμεν τέκνα Θεου* which may be translated, "The same Spirit beareth witness to our Spirit, that we are the children of God." (The preposition *συν* only denoting, that he witnesses this *at the same time* that he enables us to cry Abba, Father.) But I contend not; seeing so many other

texts, with the experience of all real Christians, sufficiently evince, that there is in every believer, both the testimony of God's Spirit, and the testimony of his own, that he is a child of God.

2. With regard to the latter, the foundation thereof is laid in those numerous texts of Scripture which describe the marks of the children of God; and that so plain, that he which runneth may read them. These are also collected together, and placed in the strongest light, by many both ancient and modern writers. If any need farther light, he may receive it by attending on the ministry of God's word; by meditating thereon before God in secret; and by conversing with those who have the knowledge of his ways. And by the reason or understanding that God has given him, which religion was designed not to extinguish, but to perfect;—according to that of the apostle, "Brethren, be not children in understanding: in malice," or wickedness, "be ye children; but in understanding be ye men;" (1 Cor. xiv 20;)—every man, applying those scriptural marks to himself, may know whether he is a child of God. Thus, if he know, first, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God," into all holy tempers and actions, "they are the sons of God;" (for which he has the infallible assurance of holy writ;) secondly, I am thus "led by the Spirit of God;" he will easily conclude,—"Therefore I am a son of God."

3. Agreeable to this are all those plain declarations of St. John, in his first Epistle: "Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." (Chap. ii. 3.) "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him;" that we are indeed the children of God. (Verse 5.) "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." (Verse 29.) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (Chap. iii. 14.) "Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him;" (verse 19;) namely, be

cause we "love one another, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, because he hath given us of his" loving "Spirit." (Chap. iv. 13.) And, "Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the" obedient "Spirit which he hath given us." (Chap. iii. 24.)

4. It is highly probable there never were any children of God, from the beginning of the world unto this day, who were farther advanced in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, than the apostle John, at the time when he wrote these words, and the fathers in Christ to whom he wrote. Notwithstanding which, it is evident, both the apostle himself, and all those pillars in God's temple, were very far from despising these marks of their being the children of God; and that they applied them to their own souls for the confirmation of their faith. Yet all this is no other than rational evidence, the witness of our spirit, our reason or understanding. It all resolves into this: Those who have these marks are children of God: but we have these marks: therefore we are children of God.

5. But how does it appear, that we have these marks? This is a question which still remains. How does it appear, that we do love God and our neighbour, and that we keep his commandments? Observe, that the meaning of the question is, How does it appear to *ourselves*, not to *others*? I would ask him, then, that proposes this question, How does it appear to you, that you are alive, and that you are now in ease, and not in pain? Are you not immediately conscious of it? By the same immediate consciousness, you will know if your soul is alive to God; if you are saved from the pain of proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit. By the same means you cannot but perceive if you love, rejoice, and delight in God. By the same you must be directly assured if you love your neighbour as yourself; if you are kindly affectioned to all mankind, and full of gentleness and long-suffering. And with regard to the outward mark of the children of God, which is, accord-

ing to St. John, the keeping his commandments, you undoubtedly know in your own breast, if, by the grace of God, it belongs to you. Your conscience informs you from day to day, if you do not take the name of God within your lips, unless with seriousness and devotion, with reverence and godly fear; if you remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; if you honour your father and mother; if you do to all as you would they should do unto you; if you possess your body in sanctification and honour; and if, whether you eat or drink, you are temperate therein, and do all to the glory of God.

6. Now this is properly the testimony of our own spirit; even the testimony of our own conscience, that God hath given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward conversation. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God, as belonging to his adopted children; even a loving heart toward God, and toward all mankind; hanging with child-like confidence on God our Father, desiring nothing but him, casting all our care upon him, and embracing every child of man with earnest, tender affection:—a consciousness that we are inwardly conformed, by the Spirit of God, to the image of his Son, and that we walk before him in justice, mercy, and truth, doing the things which are pleasing in his sight.

7. But what is that testimony of God's Spirit which is superadded to, and conjoined with, this? How does he "bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God?" It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain "the deep things of God." Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the children of God experience. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God to correct, to soften, or strengthen the expression,) the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God: that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and

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given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.

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8. That this testimony of the Spirit of God must needs, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration. We must be holy of heart, and holy in life, before we can be conscious that we are so; before we can have the testimony of our spirit, that we are inwardly and outwardly holy. But we must love God, before we can be holy at all; this being the root of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. "We love him because he first loved us." And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our spirit concerning them.

9. Then, and not till then,—when the Spirit of God beareth that witness to our spirit, "God hath loved thee, and given his own Son to be the propitiation for thy sins; the Son of God hath loved thee, and hath washed thee from thy sins in his blood,"—"we love God because he first loved us;" and, for his sake, we love our brother also. And of this we cannot but be conscious to ourselves: we "know the things that are freely given to us of God." We know that we love God, and keep his commandments; and "hereby also we know that we are of God." This is that testimony of our own spirit, which, so long as we continue to love God and keep his commandments, continues joined with the testimony of God's Spirit, "that we are the children of God."

10. Not that I would by any means be understood, by any thing which has been spoken concerning it, to exclude the operation of the Spirit of God, even from the testimony of our own spirit. In no wise. It is he that not only worketh in us every manner of thing that is good, but also shines upon his own work, and clearly shows what he has wrought. Accordingly, this is spoken

or by St. Paul, as one great end of our receiving the Spirit, "that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God:" that he may strengthen the testimony of our conscience, touching our "simplicity and godly sincerity;" and give us to discern, in a fuller and stronger light, that we now do the things which please him.

11. Should it still be inquired, "How does the Spirit of God 'bear witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God,' so as to exclude all doubt, and evince the reality of our sonship?"—the answer is clear from what has been observed above. And first, as to the witness of our spirit: The soul as intimately and evidently perceives when it loves, delights, and rejoices in God, as when it loves and delights in any thing on earth. And it can no more doubt whether it loves, delights, and rejoices or no, than whether it exists or no. If, therefore, this be just reasoning,

He that now loves God, that delights and rejoices in him with an humble joy, a holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God:

But I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God:

Therefore, I am a child of God:—

Then a Christian can in no wise doubt of his being a child of God. Of the former proposition he has as full an assurance as he has that the Scriptures are of God; and of his thus loving God, he has an inward proof, which is nothing short of self-evidence. Thus, the testimony of our own spirit is with the most intimate conviction manifested to our hearts, in such a manner as beyond all reasonable doubt to evince the reality of our sonship.

12. The manner how the *divine* testimony is manifested to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain. Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me: I cannot attain unto it. The wind bloweth, and I hear the sound thereof; but I cannot tell how it cometh, or whither it goeth. As no one knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him; so the

*manner* of the things of God knoweth no one, save the Spirit of God. But the fact we know; namely, that the Spirit of God does give a believer such a testimony of his adoption, that while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt of the shining of the sun while he stands in the full blaze of his beams.

II. 1. How this joint testimony of God's Spirit and our spirit may be clearly and solidly distinguished from the presumption of a natural mind, and from the delusion of the devil, is the next thing to be considered. And it highly imports all who desire the salvation of God, to consider it with the deepest attention, as they would not deceive their own souls. An error in this is generally observed to have the most fatal consequences; the rather, because he that errs seldom discovers his mistake till it is too late to remedy it.

2. And, first, how is this testimony to be distinguished from the presumption of a natural mind? It is certain, one who was never convinced of sin is always ready to flatter himself, and to think of himself, especially in spiritual things, more highly than he ought to think. And hence, it is in no wise strange, if one who is vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, when he hears of this privilege of true Christians, among whom he undoubtedly ranks himself, should soon work himself up into a persuasion that he is already possessed thereof. Such instances now abound in the world, and have abounded in all ages. How, then, may the real testimony of the Spirit with our spirit be distinguished from this damning presumption?

3. I answer, The holy Scriptures abound with marks, whereby the one may be distinguished from the other. They describe, in the plainest manner, the circumstances which go before, which accompany, and which follow the true, genuine testimony of the Spirit of God with the spirit of a believer. Whoever carefully weighs and attends to these, will not need to put darkness for light. He will perceive so wide a difference, with respect to all

these, between the real and the pretended witness of the Spirit, that there will be no danger, I might say no possibility, of confounding the one with the other.

4. By these, one who vainly presumes on the gift of God might surely know, if he really desired it, that he hath been hitherto "given up to a strong delusion," and suffered to believe a lie. For the Scriptures lay down those clear, obvious marks, as preceding, accompanying, and following that gift, which a little reflection would convince him, beyond all doubt, were never found in his soul. For instance: the Scripture describes repentance, or conviction of sin, as constantly going before this witness of pardon. So, "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. iii. 2.) "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark i. 15.) "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, for the remission of sins." (Acts ii. 38.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts iii. 19.) In conformity whereto, our Church also continually places repentance before pardon, or the witness of it. "He pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel." "Almighty God—hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them who, with hearty repentance and true faith, turn unto him." But he is a stranger even to this repentance: he hath never known a broken and a contrite heart: "the remembrance of his sins" was never "grievous unto him," nor "the burden of them intolerable." In repeating those words, he never meant what he said; he merely paid a compliment to God. And were it only from the want of this previous work of God, he hath too great reason to believe that he hath grasped a mere shadow, and never yet known the real privilege of the sons of God.

5. Again: the Scriptures describe the being born of God, which must precede the witness that we are his children, as a vast and mighty change; a change "from darkness to light," as well as "from the power of Satan unto God;" as a "passing from death unto life," a resurrection from the dead. Thus the apostle to the

Ephesians: "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." (ii. 1.) And again, "When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Verses 5, 6.) But what knoweth he, concerning whom we now speak, of any such change as this? He is altogether unacquainted with this whole matter. This is a language which he does not understand. He tells you he always was a Christian. He knows no time when he had need of such a change. By this also, if he give himself leave to think, may he know, that he is not born of the Spirit; that he has never yet known God; but has mistaken the voice of nature for the voice of God.

6. But waiving the consideration of whatever he has or has not experienced in time past; by the present marks may we easily distinguish a child of God from a presumptuous self-deceiver. The Scriptures describe that joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of his Spirit, as a humble joy; a joy that abases to the dust, that makes a pardoned sinner cry out, "I am vile! What am I, or my father's house? Now mine eye seeth thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes!" And wherever lowliness is, there is meekness, patience, gentleness, long-suffering. There is a soft, yielding spirit; a mildness and sweetness, a tenderness of soul, which words cannot express. But do these fruits attend that *supposed* testimony of the Spirit in a presumptuous man? Just the reverse. The more confident he is of the favour of God, the more is he lifted up; the more does he exalt himself; the more haughty and assuming is his whole behaviour. The stronger witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any reproof; the more impatient of contradiction. Instead of being more meek, and gentle, and teachable, more "swift to hear, and slow to speak," he is more slow to hear and swift to speak; more unready to learn of any one; more fiery and vehement in his temper, and eager in his conversa-

tion. Yea, perhaps, there will sometimes appear a kind of fierceness in his air, his manner of speaking, his whole deportment, as if he were just going to take the matter out of God's hands, and himself to "devour the adversaries."

7. Once more: the Scriptures teach, "This is the love of God," the sure mark thereof, "that we keep his commandments." (1 John v. 3.) And our Lord himself saith, "He that keepeth my commandments, he it is that loveth me." (John xiv. 21.) Love rejoices to obey; to do, in every point, whatever is acceptable to the beloved. A true lover of God hastens to do his will on earth as it is done in heaven. But is this the character of the presumptuous pretender to the love of God? Nay, but his love gives him a liberty to disobey, to break, not keep, the commandments of God. Perhaps, when he was in fear of the wrath of God, he did labour to do his will. But now, looking on himself as "not under the law," he thinks he is no longer obliged to observe it. He is therefore less zealous of good works; less careful to abstain from evil; less watchful over his own heart; less jealous over his tongue. He is less earnest to deny himself, and to take up his cross daily. In a word, the whole form of his life is changed, since he has fancied himself to be *at liberty*. He is no longer "exercising himself unto godliness;" "wrestling not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers," enduring hardships, "agonizing to enter in at the strait gate." No; he has found an easier way to heaven; a broad, smooth, flowery path; in which he can say to his soul, "Soul, take thy ease; eat, drink, and be merry." It follows, with undeniable evidence, that he has not the true testimony of his own spirit. He cannot be conscious of having those marks which he hath not; that lowliness, meekness, and obedience: nor yet can the Spirit of the God of truth bear witness to a lie; or testify that he is a child of God, when he is manifestly a child of the devil.

8. Discover thyself, thou poor self-deceiver!—thou

who art confident of being a child of God; thou who sayest, "I have the witness in myself," and therefore defiest all thy enemies. Thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting; even in the balance of the sanctuary. The word of the Lord hath tried thy soul, and proved thee to be reprobate silver. Thou art not lowly of heart; therefore thou hast not received the Spirit of Jesus unto this day. Thou art not gentle and meek; therefore thy joy is nothing worth: it is not joy in the Lord. Thou dost not keep his commandments; therefore thou lovest him not, neither art thou partaker of the Holy Ghost. It is consequently as certain and as evident as the oracles of God can make it, his Spirit doth not bear witness with thy spirit that thou art a child of God. Oh, cry unto him, that the scales may fall off thine eyes; that thou mayest know thyself as thou art known; that thou mayest receive the sentence of death in thyself, till thou hear the voice that raises the dead, saying, "Be of good cheer: thy sins are forgiven; thy faith hath made thee whole."

9 "But how may one who has the real witness in himself distinguish it from presumption?" How, I pray, do you distinguish day from night? How do you distinguish light from darkness; or the light of a star, or a glimmering taper, from the light of the noonday sun? Is there not an inherent, obvious, essential difference between the one and the other? And do you not immediately and directly perceive that difference, provided your senses are rightly disposed? In like manner, there is an inherent, essential difference between spiritual light and spiritual darkness; and between the light wherewith the Sun of righteousness shines upon our heart, and that glimmering light which arises only from "sparks of our own kindling;" and this difference also is immediately and directly perceived, if our spiritual senses are rightly disposed.

10. To require a more minute and philosophical account of the manner whereby we distinguish these, and of the *criteria*, or intrinsic marks, whereby we know

the voice of God, is to make a demand which can never be answered; no, not by one who has the deepest knowledge of God. Suppose, when Paul answered before Agrippa, the wise Roman had said, "Thou talkest of hearing the voice of the Son of God. How dost thou know it was his voice? By what *criteria*, what intrinsic marks, dost thou know the voice of God? Explain to me the *manner* of distinguishing this from a human or angelic voice?" Can you believe, the apostle himself would have once attempted to answer so idle a demand? And yet, doubtless, the moment he heard that voice, he knew it was the voice of God. But *how* he knew this, who is able to explain? Perhaps neither man nor angel.

11. To come yet closer: suppose God were now to speak to any soul, "Thy sins are forgiven thee,"—he must be willing that soul should know his voice; otherwise he would speak in vain. And he is able to effect this; for, whenever he wills, to do is present with him. And he does effect it: that soul is absolutely assured, "This voice is the voice of God." But yet he who hath that witness in himself cannot explain it to one who hath it not: nor indeed is it to be expected that he should. Were there any natural medium to prove, or natural method to explain, the things of God to unexperienced men, then the natural man might discern and know the things of the Spirit of God. But this is utterly contrary to the assertion of the apostle, that "he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned;" even by spiritual senses, which the natural man hath not.

12. "But how shall I know that my spiritual senses are rightly disposed?" This also is a question of vast importance; for if a man mistake in this, he may run on in endless error and delusion. "And how am I assured that this is not my case; and that I do not mistake the voice of the Spirit?" Even by the testimony of your own spirit: by "the answer of a good conscience toward God." By the fruits which he hath wrought

in your spirit, you shall know the testimony of the Spirit of God. Hereby you shall know, that you are in no delusion; that you have not deceived your own soul. The immediate fruits of the Spirit, ruling in the heart, are "love, joy, peace, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, long-suffering." And the outward fruits are, the doing good to all men; the doing no evil to any; and the walking in the light,—a zealous, uniform obedience to all the commandments of God.

13. By the same fruits shall you distinguish this voice of God from any delusion of the devil. That proud spirit cannot humble thee before God. He neither can nor would soften thy heart, and melt it first into earnest mourning after God, and then into filial love. It is not the adversary of God and man that enables thee to love thy neighbour; or to put on meekness, gentleness, patience, temperance, and the whole armour of God. He is not divided against himself, or a destroyer of sin, his own work. No; it is none but the Son of God who cometh "to destroy the works of the devil." As surely therefore as holiness is of God, and as sin is the work of the devil, so surely the witness thou hast in thyself is not of Satan, but of God.

14. Well then mayest thou say, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!" Thanks be unto God, who giveth me to "know in whom I have believed;" who hath "sent forth the Spirit of his Son into my heart, crying, Abba, Father," and even now, "bearing witness with my spirit that I am a child of God!" And see, that not only thy lips, but thy life, show forth his praise. He hath sealed thee for his own: glorify him then in thy body and thy spirit, which are his. Beloved, if thou hast this hope in thyself, purify thyself as he is pure. While thou beholdest what manner of love the Father hath given thee, that thou shouldest be called a child of God, cleanse thyself "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" and let all thy thoughts, words, and works be a spiritual sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God through Christ Jesus!

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON X.

- Ques. 1. (§ 1.) How has the text been misconstrued?
- Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What effect has this produced?
- Ques. 3. (§ 3.) Is either extreme necessary?
- Ques. 4. (§ 3.) What does he propose to consider?
- Ques. 5. (I. 1.) What is first considered?
- Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What is the foundation of the testimony of our own spirit?
- Ques. 7. (I. 3.) What proofs are cited from St. John?
- Ques. 8. (I. 4.) What does he say of the gracious experience of this apostle?
- Ques. 9. (I. 5.) How is love to God and our neighbor proved?
- Ques. 10. (I. 6.) Is this the testimony of conscience?
- Ques. 11. (I. 7.) How does he define the testimony of God's Spirit?
- Ques. 12. (I. 8.) Does it precede or follow our own testimony?
- Ques. 13. (I. 9.) What does the Spirit of God testify?
- Ques. 14. (I. 10.) Is this testimony excluded from our own?
- Ques. 15. (I. 11.) What is further said of the divine witness?
- Ques. 16. (I. 11.) State the syllogism here given.
- Ques. 17. (I. 12.) Does he explain the *manner* of the divine witness?
- Ques. 18. (II. 1.) How is this joint testimony distinguished?
- Ques. 19. (II. 2.) How is it distinguished from presumption?

- Ques. 20. (II. 3.) Are the marks to be found in Scripture?
- Ques. 21. (II. 4.) How may vain presumption be detected?
- Ques. 22. (II. 5.) What do the Scriptures say of the new birth?
- Ques. 23. (II. 6.) How is a child of God distinguished from a self-deceiver?
- Ques. 24. (II. 7.) What is further said upon this point?
- Ques. 25. (II. 8.) How is the self-deceiver addressed?
- Ques. 26. (II. 9.) What is the argument here from consciousness?
- Ques. 27. (II. 10.) Should we require more than this?
- Ques. 28. (II. 11.) How is the argument continued?
- Ques. 29. (II. 12.) What other question of vast importance is considered?
- Ques. 30. (II. 13.) How can we tell this voice of God?
- Ques. 31. (II. 14.) How does the discourse conclude?

SERMON XI.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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“ONE of the most difficult points in the definition of the direct witness,” says Burwash, “is the distinction between the act of faith and the witness. Mr. Wesley held that faith had in itself something of the divine assurance. All his definitions of faith given in the preceding sermons imply this. Yet he admits in one of his controversial letters that ‘a conviction that we are justified cannot be implied in justifying faith.’ Perhaps his clearest statement on this point is to be found in the doctrinal minutes already quoted: ‘A sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost—“Christ loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*.” This is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, “Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood.” And this is saving faith whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.’ From this and other like passages we may deduce the following summary:

“1. Faith has in it divine assurance, and all assurance springs from God-given faith.

“2. Justifying faith is a personal divine assurance of the *provision* of salvation in Christ for me.

“3. The witness is personal divine assurance of the *possession* of that salvation by me.

“4. Abiding saving faith grows out of and includes the witness, as the justifying act of faith preceded it.”

It will be perceived from ¶ 2 (I. 2) that this sermon was written twenty years after Sermon X.; and as this (XI.)

bears the date 1767, the preceding discourse was written in 1747. (See Ques. 6, Sermon XI.)

### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XI.

I. The importance of the doctrine. Danger of enthusiasm and formality. The peculiar testimony of Methodism.

II. What is the witness of the Spirit? A *testimony* given by the Spirit to the fact of our sonship, followed by the fruits. Definition repeated, with addition of the word immediately.

Not by an outward voice, nor always by an inward voice, nor always by a passage of Scripture, but in his own way producing clear satisfaction that God is reconciled.

All are agreed that there is a witness, that there is an indirect witness, and that the witness is never without the fruits. But some question whether there be a *direct* witness of the Spirit.

III. Proof that there is a direct witness.

1. From the plain sense of the Scripture (Rom. viii. 16, and also 15; Gal. iv. 6).

2. From the necessity of the case.

3. From the experience of God's children.

IV. Objections.

1. To the proof from experience. A. This only confirms Scripture. At times the only means of assurance.

2. It does not prove the genuineness of our profession. A. It is not given to assure others, but ourselves, and precedes all profession.

3. The "Holy Spirit" and "good gifts" are identical. A. This is *irrelevant*.

4. The scripture refers to the fruits, etc. A. Certainly; but does not deny direct witness.

5. It does not secure us from delusion. A. The combined testimony does.

6. It is not unnecessary.

7. False professors should not discredit it.

V. Summary. Two practical inferences.

## SERMON XI.

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

## DISCOURSE II.

*"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."—Rom. viii. 16.*

I. 1. NONE who believe the Scriptures to be the word of God can doubt the importance of such a truth as this;—a truth revealed therein, not once only, not obscurely, not incidentally; but frequently, and that in express terms; but solemnly and of set purpose, as denoting one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God.

2. And it is the more necessary to explain and defend this truth, because there is a danger on the right hand and on the left. If we deny it, there is a danger lest our religion degenerate into mere formality; lest, having "a form of godliness," we neglect, if not "deny, the power of it." If we allow it, but do not understand what we allow, we are liable to run into all the wildness of enthusiasm. It is therefore needful, in the highest degree, to guard those who fear God from both these dangers, by a scriptural and rational illustration and confirmation of this momentous truth.

3. It may seem, something of this kind is the more needful because so little has been wrote on the subject with any clearness; unless some discourses on the wrong side of the question, which explain it quite away. And it cannot be doubted, but these were occasioned, at least in a great measure, by the crude, unscriptural, irrational explication of others, who "knew not what they spake. nor whereof they affirmed."

4. It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine; because it is one grand part of the testimony which God has given them to bear to all mankind. It is by his peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of his children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years wellnigh lost and forgotten.

II. 1. But what is the witness of the Spirit? The original word, *μαρτυρια*, may be rendered either (as it is in several places) *the witness*, or, less ambiguously, *the testimony or the record*: so it is rendered in our translation, 1 John v. 11, "This is the record," the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings, "that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit: he is the person testifying. What he testifies to us is, "that we are the children of God." The immediate result of this testimony is, "the fruit of the Spirit;" namely, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness:" and without these, the testimony itself cannot continue. For it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin; in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

2. I observed many years ago, "It is hard to find words in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in his children. But perhaps one might say, (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression,) by the testimony of the Spirit, I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved

me, and given himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I am reconciled to God."

3 After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered, so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the word of God, I will readily lay these aside.

4. Meantime, let it be observed, I do not mean hereby, that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose, that he always applies to the heart (though he often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his "iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered."

5. Now what is the matter of dispute concerning this? Not whether there be a witness or testimony of the Spirit. Not whether the Spirit does testify with our spirit that we are the children of God. None can deny this, without flatly contradicting the Scriptures, and charging a lie upon the God of truth. Therefore, that there is a testimony of the Spirit is acknowledged by all parties.

6. Neither is it questioned, whether there is an *indirect* witness, or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly, the same with the testimony of a good conscience towards God; and is the result of reason, or reflection on what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the word of God, and partly from our own experience. The word of God says, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God: experience, or inward consciousness, tells me, that I

have the fruit of the Spirit; and hence I rationally conclude, "Therefore I am a child of God." This is likewise allowed on all hands, and so is no matter of controversy.

7. Nor do we assert, that there can be any real testimony of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit. We assert, on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately springs from this testimony; not always indeed in the same degree, even when the testimony is first given; and much less afterwards. Neither joy nor peace is always at one stay; no, nor love; as neither is the testimony itself always equally strong and clear.

8. But the point in question is, whether there be any *direct* testimony of the Spirit at all; whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit.

III. 1. I believe there is; because that is the plain, natural meaning of the text, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." It is manifest, here are two witnesses mentioned, who together testify the same thing; the Spirit of God, and our own spirit. The late Bishop of London, in his sermon on this text, seems astonished that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now, "The testimony of our own spirit," says the bishop, "is one, which is the consciousness of our own sincerity;" or, to express the same thing a little more clearly, the consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. When our spirit is conscious of this, of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, it easily infers from these premises that we are the children of God.

2. It is true, that great man supposes the other witness to be, "the consciousness of our own good works." This, he affirms, is the testimony of God's Spirit. But this is included in the testimony of our own spirit; yea, and in sincerity, even according to the common sense of the word. So the apostle, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly

sincerity we have had our conversation in the world :” where it is plain, sincerity refers to our words and actions at least as much as to our inward dispositions. So that this is not another witness, but the very same that he mentioned before ; the consciousness of our good works being only one branch of the consciousness of our sincerity. Consequently here is only one witness still. If, therefore, the text speaks of two witnesses, one of these is not the consciousness of our good works, neither of our sincerity ; all this being manifestly contained in the testimony of our spirit.

3. What then is the other witness ? This might easily be learned, if the text itself were not sufficiently clear, from the verse immediately preceding : “Ye have received, not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” It follows “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

4. This is farther explained by the parallel text, (Gal. iv. 6,) “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” Is not this something *immediate* and *direct*, not the result of reflection or argumentation ? Does not the Spirit cry, “Abba, Father,” in our hearts, the moment it is given, antecedently to any reflection upon our sincerity ; yea, to any reasoning whatsoever ? And is not this the plain, natural sense of the words, which strikes any one as soon as he hears them ? All these texts then, in their most obvious meaning, describe a direct testimony of the Spirit.

5. That the testimony of the Spirit of God must, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration : we must be holy in heart and life before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now, we cannot love God, till we know he loves us : “We love him, because he first loved us.” And we cannot know his love to us, till his

Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Till then we cannot believe it; we cannot say, "The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

"Then, only then we feel  
Our interest in his blood,  
And cry, with joy unspeakable,  
Thou art my Lord, my God!"

Since, therefore, the testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God, and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our consciousness thereof.

6. And here properly comes in, to confirm this scriptural doctrine, the experience of the children of God; the experience not of two or three, not of a few, but of a great multitude, which no man can number. It has been confirmed, both in this and in all ages, by "a cloud" of living and dying "witnesses." It is confirmed by *your* experience and *mine*. The Spirit itself bore witness to my spirit, that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof; and I immediately cried, "Abba, Father!" And this I did (and so did you) before I reflected on, or was conscious of, any fruit of the Spirit. It was from this testimony received, that love, joy, peace, and the whole fruit of the Spirit flowed. First, I heard,

"Thy sins are forgiven! Accepted thou art!—  
I listen'd, and heaven sprang up in my heart."

4  
7. But this is confirmed, not only by the experience of the children of God,—thousands of whom can declare that they never did know themselves to be in the favour of God till it was directly witnessed to them by his Spirit,—but by all those who are convinced of sin, who feel the wrath of God abiding on them. These cannot be satisfied with any thing less than a direct testimony from his Spirit, that he is "merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembers their sins and iniquities no more." Tell any of these, "You are to know you are a child, by reflecting on what he has wrought"

in you, on your love, joy, and peace;" and will he not immediately reply, "By all this I know I am a child of the devil? I have no more love to God than the devil has; my carnal mind is enmity against God. I have no joy in the Holy Ghost; my soul is sorrowful even unto death. I have no peace; my heart is a troubled sea; I am all storm and tempest." And which way can these souls possibly be comforted, but by a divine testimony (not that they are good, or sincere, or conformable to the Scripture in heart and life, but) that God *justifieth the ungodly*?—him that, till the moment he is justified, is all ungodly, void of all true holiness; "him that worketh not," that worketh nothing that is truly good, till he is conscious that he is accepted, not for any "works of righteousness which he hath done," but by the mere free mercy of God; wholly and solely for what the Son of God hath done and suffered for him. And can it be any otherwise, if "a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law?" If so, what inward or outward goodness can he be conscious of, antecedent to his justification? Nay, is not the having nothing to pay, that is, the being conscious that "there dwelleth in us no good thing," neither inward nor outward goodness, essentially, indispensably necessary, before we can be "justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ?" Was ever any man justified since his coming into the world, or can any man ever be justified till he is brought to that point,—

"I give up every plea beside,—

Lord, I am damn'd; but Thou hast died?"

8. Every one, therefore, who denies the existence of such a testimony, does in effect deny justification by faith. It follows, that either he never experienced this, either he never was justified, or that he has forgotten, as St. Peter speaks, *του καθαρισμου των παλαι αυτου αμαρτιων*, the purification from his former sins; the experience he then had himself; the manner wherein God wrought in his own soul, when his former sins were blotted out.

9. And the experience even of the children of the world here confirms that of the children of God. Many of these have a desire to please God : some of them take much pains to please him ; but do they not, one and all, count it the highest absurdity for any to talk of *knowing* his sins are forgiven ? Which of *them* even pretends to any such thing ? And yet many of them are conscious of their own sincerity. Many of them undoubtedly have, in a degree, the testimony of their own spirit, a consciousness of their own uprightness. But this brings them no consciousness that they are forgiven ; no knowledge that they are the children of God. Yea, the more sincere they are, the more uneasy they generally are, for want of knowing it ; plainly showing that this cannot be known, in a satisfactory manner, by the bare testimony of our own spirit, without God's directly testifying that we are his children.

IV. But abundance of objections have been made to this ; the chief of which it may be well to consider.

5  
1. It is objected, first, " Experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine which is not founded on Scripture." This is undoubtedly true ; and it is an important truth : but it does not affect the present question ; for it has been shown, that this doctrine is founded on Scripture ; therefore experience is properly alleged to confirm it.

2. " But madmen, French prophets, and enthusiasts of every kind, have imagined they experienced this witness." They have so ; and perhaps not a few of them did, although they did not retain it long : but if they did not, this is no proof at all that others have not experienced it ; as a madman's imagining himself a king, does not prove that there are no *real* kings.

" Nay, many who pleaded strongly for this, have utterly decried the Bible." Perhaps so ; but this was no necessary consequence : thousands plead for it who have the highest esteem for the Bible.

" Yea, but many have fatally deceived themselves hereby, and got above all conviction."

And yet a scriptural doctrine is no worse, though men abuse it to their own destruction.

3. "But I lay it down as an undoubted truth, The fruit of the Spirit is the witness of the Spirit." Not undoubted; thousands doubt of, yea, flatly deny it: but let that pass. "If this witness be sufficient, there is no need of any other. But it is sufficient, unless in one of these cases, 1. The *total absence* of the fruit of the Spirit." And this is the case, when the direct witness is first given. 2. "The *not perceiving it*." But to contend for it in this case, is to contend for being in the favour of God, and not knowing it." True; not knowing it at that time any otherwise than by the testimony which is given for that end. And this we do contend for: we contend that the direct witness may shine clear, even while the indirect one is under a cloud.

4. It is objected, secondly, "The design of the witness contended for is, to prove that the profession we make is genuine. But it does not prove this." I answer, The proving this is not the design of it. It is antecedent to our making any profession at all, but that of being lost, undone, guilty, helpless sinners. It is designed to assure those to whom it is given, that they are the children of God; that they are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And this does not suppose that their preceding thoughts, words, and actions are conformable to the rule of Scripture: it supposes quite the reverse; namely, that they are sinners all over; sinners both in heart and life. Were it otherwise, God would *justify the godly*; and *their own works* would be counted to them for *righteousness*. And I cannot but fear that a supposition of our being justified by works is at the root of all these objections; for, whoever cordially believes that God *imputes* to all that are justified *righteousness without works*, will find no difficulty in allowing the witness of his Spirit, preceding the fruit of it.

5. It is objected, thirdly, "One evangelist says, 'Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to

them that ask him.' The other evangelist calls the same thing, 'good gifts;' abundantly demonstrating that the Spirit's way of bearing witness is by giving good gifts." Nay, here is nothing at all about *bearing witness*, either in the one text or the other. Therefore, till this demonstration is better demonstrated, I let it stand as it is.

6. It is objected, fourthly, "The Scripture says, 'The tree is known by its fruits. Prove all things. Try the spirits. Examine yourselves.'" Most true. Therefore, let every man who believes he "hath the witness in himself," try whether it be of God: if the fruit follow, it is; otherwise it is not. For certainly "the tree is known by its fruit:" hereby we *prove* if it be "of God."

"But the direct witness is never referred to in the book of God." Not as standing alone; not as a single witness; but as connected with the other; as giving a *joint testimony*; testifying *with our spirit*, that we are children of God. And who is able to prove that it is not *thus* referred to in this very scripture? "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own-selves. Know ye not your own-selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" It is by no means clear, that they did not know this by a *direct* as well as a *remote* witness. How is it proved that they did not know it, first, by an inward consciousness; and then, by love, joy, and peace?

7. "But the testimony arising from the internal and external change is constantly referred to in the Bible." It is so: and we constantly refer thereto, to confirm the testimony of the Spirit.

"Nay, all the marks *you* have given, whereby to distinguish the operations of God's Spirit from delusion, refer to the change wrought in us and upon us." This, likewise, is undoubtedly true.

8. It is objected, fifthly, that "the direct witness of the Spirit does not secure us from the greatest delusion. And is that a witness fit to be trusted, whose testimony cannot be depended on? that is forced to fly to some

thing else, to prove what it asserts?" I answer: To secure us from all delusion, God gives us two witnesses that we are his children. And this they testify jointly. Therefore, "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." And while they are joined, we cannot be deluded; their testimony can be depended on. They are fit to be trusted in the highest degree, and need nothing else to prove what they assert.

"Nay, the direct witness only asserts, but does not prove, any thing." By two witnesses shall every word be established. And when the Spirit witnesses with our spirit, as God designs it to do, then it fully proves that we are children of God.

9. It is objected, sixthly, "You own the change wrought is a sufficient testimony, unless in the case of severe trials, such as that of our Saviour upon the cross; but none of us can be tried in that manner." But you or I may be tried in such a manner, and so may any other child of God, that it will be impossible for us to keep our filial confidence in God without the direct witness of his Spirit.

10. It is objected, lastly, "The greatest contenders for it are some of the proudest and most uncharitable of men." Perhaps some of the *hottest* contenders for it are both proud and uncharitable; but many of the *firmest* contenders for it are eminently meek and lowly in heart; and, indeed, in all other respects also,

"True followers of their lamb-like Lord."

The preceding objections are the most considerable that I have heard, and I believe contain the strength of the cause. Yet I apprehend whoever calmly and impartially considers those objections and the answers together, will easily see that they do not destroy, no, nor weaken, the evidence of that great truth, that the Spirit of God does *directly*, as well as *indirectly*, testify that we are children of God.

V. 1. The sum of all is this: The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the souls of believers,

whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit, that they are children of God. And it is not questioned, whether there is a testimony of the Spirit; but whether there is any *direct* testimony; whether there is any other than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. We believe there is; because this is the plain natural meaning of the text, illustrated both by the preceding words, and by the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Galatians; because, in the nature of the thing, the testimony must precede the fruit which springs from it; and because this plain meaning of the word of God is confirmed by the experience of innumerable children of God; yea, and by the experience of all who are convinced of sin, who can never rest till they have a direct witness; and even of the children of the world, who, not having the witness in themselves, one and all declare, none can *know* his sins forgiven.

2. And whereas it is objected, that experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine unsupported by Scripture;—that madmen and enthusiasts of every kind have imagined such a witness;—that the design of that witness is to prove our profession genuine, which design it does not answer;—that the Scripture says, “The tree is known by its fruit;” “Examine yourselves; prove your own selves;” and, meantime, the direct witness is never referred to in all the book of God;—that it does not secure us from the greatest delusions; and, lastly, that the change wrought in us is a sufficient testimony, unless in such trials as Christ alone suffered:—we answer,—1. Experience is sufficient to *confirm* a doctrine which is grounded on Scripture. 2. Though many fancy they experience what they do not, this is no prejudice to real experience. 3. The design of that witness is to assure us we are children of God; and this design it does answer. 4. The true witness of the Spirit is known by its fruit, “love, peace, joy;” not indeed preceding, but following it. 5. It cannot be proved, that the direct as well as the indirect witness is not referred to in that

very text, "Know ye not your ownelves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" 6. The Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirit, does secure us from all delusion. And, lastly, we are all liable to trials, wherein the testimony of our own spirit is not sufficient; wherein nothing less than the direct testimony of God's Spirit can assure us that we are his children.

3. Two inferences may be drawn from the whole. The first, Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate from the fruit of it. If the Spirit of God does really testify that we are children of God, the immediate consequence will be the fruit of the Spirit, even "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance." And however this fruit may be clouded for a while, during the time of strong temptation, so that it does not appear to the tempted person, while Satan is sifting him as wheat; yet the substantial part of it remains, even under the thickest cloud. It is true, joy in the Holy Ghost may be withdrawn, during the hour of trial; yea, the soul may be "exceeding sorrowful," while "the hour and power of darkness" continue; but even this is generally restored with increase, till we rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. The second inference is, Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. There may be foretastes of joy, of peace, of love, and those not delusive, but really from God, long before we have the witness in ourselves; before the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits that we have "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Yea, there may be a degree of long-suffering, of gentleness, of fidelity, meekness, temperance, (not a shadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God,) before we "are accepted in the Beloved," and consequently, before we have a testimony of our acceptance: but it is by no means advisable to rest here; it is at the peril of our souls if we do. If we are wise, we shall be continually crying to God, until his Spirit cry in our heart, "Abba."

Father!" This is the privilege of all the children of God; and without this we can never be assured that we are his children. Without this we cannot retain a steady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received this Spirit of adoption, this "peace which passeth all understanding," and which expels all painful doubt and fear, will "keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." And when this has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holiness, it is undoubtedly the will of Him that calleth us, to give us always what he has once given; so that there is no need that we should ever more be deprived of either the testimony of God's Spirit, or the testimony of our own, the consciousness of our walking in all righteousness and true holiness.

**NEWBY, April 4, 1767.**

### QUESTIONS ON SERMON XI.

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- Ques. 1. (I. 1.) What is said of the doctrine of the text?
- Ques. 2. (I. 2.) Why was it necessary to explain and defend it?
- Ques. 3. (I. 3.) Why was it the more needful?
- Ques. 4. (I. 4.) Whom does it more nearly concern?
- Ques. 5. (II. 1.) What is the meaning of the Greek word?
- Ques. 6. (II. 2.) What sermon does he quote here? *Ans.* Sermon X., the preceding discourse in this series—I. 7.
- Ques. 7. (II. 3.) After twenty years' consideration, what does he say?
- Ques. 8. (II. 4.) What does he say of an outward and inward voice?
- Ques. 9. (II. 5.) Are all parties agreed as to the existence of the witness of the Spirit?
- Ques. 10. (II. 6.) What does he say of the *indirect* witness?
- Ques. 11. (II. 7.) Is the witness separated from the fruit?
- Ques. 12. (II. 8.) What, then, is the point in question?
- Ques. 13. (III. 1.) What is the plain, natural meaning of the text?
- Ques. 14. (III. 2.) What does the Bishop of London say of it?
- Ques. 15. (III. 3.) What is the other witness?
- Ques. 16. (III. 4.) How is this further explained?
- Ques. 17. (III. 5.) Is this divine testimony antecedent to our own?
- Ques. 18. (III. 6.) How is this view confirmed?
- Ques. 19. (III. 7.) How is it further confirmed?

Ques. 20. (III. 8.) What consequence follows a denial of this doctrine?

Ques. 21. (III. 9.) How does the experience of the children of the world confirm this doctrine?

Ques. 22. (IV. 1.) What is the first objection?

Ques. 23. (IV. 2.) What is the next?

Ques. 24. (IV. 3.) What further objection is presented?

Ques. 25. (IV. 4.) What objection is here stated?

Ques. 26. (IV. 5.) How are the evangelists quoted?

Ques. 27. (IV. 6.) What arguments are here objected?

Ques. 28. (IV. 7.) What does he here grant to the objector?

Ques. 29. (IV. 8.) How are we secured from delusion?

Ques. 30. (IV. 9.) How does he answer the sixth objection?

Ques. 31. (IV. 10.) How does he answer the last?

Ques. 32. (V. 1.) What is the sum of all this?

Ques. 33. (V. 2.) State the argument in this paragraph.

Ques. 34. (V. 3.) What two inferences are drawn from the whole?

Ques. 35. (V. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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"THIS sermon," says Prof. Burwash, "was originally the supplement to the tenth, the eleventh having been interposed in 1771. It presents before us the continuous state of assurance which arises out of the initial experience of assurance there described. The first assurance is conditioned upon faith only; this upon the conscious obedience which faith enables us to render. Mr. Wesley grounds this assurance upon the testimony of conscience. Faith, hope, and love are, according to Mr. Wesley, the essence of religion. But the very first effect of faith is peace, or the relief of the moral nature from the sense of guilt. On the other hand, good hope can only live by the side of a good conscience; and love unites with conscience in bringing forth all good works. There is thus perfect unity and harmony of the moral and religious elements in the Christian experience. There is also a continuity of this moral element with the preceding elements of Christian experience. Faith, the direct witness, the abiding faith, and testimony of conscience follow in a natural order one from the other, and are absolutely necessary one to the other. Mr. Wesley distinctly recognizes the presence and the power of the Holy Ghost in every one of these factors of religious life, quite as much so in the last as in the first. Conscience as well as faith sees the things of God by the Spirit of God."

Mr. Wesley's definition of conscience, being derived from the Scriptures, will abide the test of criticism and of time that tries all things. Gradually the writers on moral phi-

losophy are laying the same foundation. A recent writer who adopts the intuitional philosophy affirms that there are three states of the personal reason: consciousness, which is the concrete state; self-consciousness, which is the reason acting upon things without as well as within itself; and sub-consciousness, which forms the materials upon which the reason acts. According to this division of the reason, conscience is the state of self-consciousness, which concerns itself with objects of right and wrong, determined for itself. This act of self-consciousness is only rightly performed, according to Mr. Wesley and the Scriptures, when the Divine Spirit enlightens the understanding and obedience follows the conviction of duty.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XII.

I. What is conscience? Not mere consciousness, but consciousness of right and wrong implanted by God in the soul. Its rule is, generally, the law written in the heart; specially, the word of God.

II. A good conscience implies: 1. A right understanding of God's word. 2. A knowledge of ourselves, both inward tempers and outward conversation. 3. An agreement of these with the rule. 4. An inward perception of this agreement.

The foundation of this must be laid in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle's description of the good conscience. "Conversation" includes all inward and outward life; "simplicity" is right intention; "sincerity," the faithful execution of intention; not a mere morality of nature, but wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost.

III. The joy springing from this is: 1. Not a natural joy, or mere exuberance of spirits. 2. Not a mere blindness of conscience concealing sin. 3. Nor a callousness of conscience taking pleasure in sin. 4. But a joy in obedience, loving God, and keeping his commandments.

## SERMON XII.

## THE WITNESS OF OUR OWN SPIRIT.

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*"This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."*  
—2 COR. i. 12.

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1. SUCH is the voice of every true believer in Christ, so long as he abides in faith and love. "He that followeth me," saith our Lord, "walketh not in darkness:" and while he hath the light, he rejoiceth therein. As he hath "received the Lord Jesus Christ," so he walketh in him; and while he walketh in him, the exhortation of the apostle takes place in his soul, day by day, "Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice."

2. But that we may not build our house upon the sand, (lest when the rains descend, and the winds blow, and the floods arise and beat upon it, it fall, and great be the fall thereof,) I intend in the following discourse to show, what is the nature and ground of a Christian's joy. We know, in general, it is that happy peace, that calm satisfaction of spirit, which arises from such a testimony of his conscience, as is here described by the apostle. But, in order to understand this the more thoroughly, it will be requisite to weigh all his words; whence will easily appear, both what we are to understand by *conscience*, and what by the *testimony* thereof; and also, how he that hath this testimony rejoiceth evermore

3. And, first, what are we to understand by *conscience*? What is the meaning of this word that is in

every one's mouth? One would imagine it was an exceeding difficult thing to discover this, when we consider how large and numerous volumes have been from time to time wrote on this subject; and how all the treasures of ancient and modern learning have been ransacked, in order to explain it. And yet it is to be feared, it has not received much light from all those elaborate inquiries. Rather, have not most of those writers puzzled the cause; "darkening counsel by words without knowledge;" perplexing a subject plain in itself and easy to be understood? For, set aside but hard words, and every man of an honest heart will soon understand the thing.

4. God has made us thinking beings, capable of perceiving what is present, and of reflecting or looking back on what is past. In particular, we are capable of perceiving whatsoever passes in our own hearts or lives; of knowing whatsoever we feel or do; and that either while it passes, or when it is past. This we mean when we say, man is a *conscious* being: he hath a *consciousness*, or inward perception, both of things present and past, relating to himself, of his own tempers and outward behaviour. But what we usually term *conscience* implies somewhat more than this. It is not barely the knowledge of our present or the remembrance of our preceding life. To remember, to bear witness either of past or present things, is only one, and the least office of conscience: its main business is to excuse or accuse, to approve or disapprove, to acquit or condemn.

5. Some late writers, indeed, have given a new name to this, and have chose to style it a *moral sense*. But the old word seems preferable to the new, were it only on this account, that it is more common and familiar among men, and therefore easier to be understood. And to Christians it is undeniably preferable, on another account also; namely, because it is scriptural; because it is the word which the wisdom of God hath chose to use in the inspired writings.

And according to the meaning wherein it is generally

used there, particularly in the Epistles of St. Paul, we may understand by conscience, a faculty or power, implanted by God in every soul that comes into the world, of perceiving what is right or wrong in his own heart or life, in his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions.

6. But what is the rule whereby men are to judge of right and wrong? whereby their conscience is to be directed? The rule of heathens, as the apostle teaches elsewhere, is "the law written in their hearts." "These," saith he, "not having the" outward "law, are a law unto themselves: who show the work of the law," that which the outward law prescribes, "written in their heart," by the finger of God; "their conscience also bearing witness," whether they walk by this rule or not, "and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or even excusing," acquitting, defending them; *η και απολογουμενων*. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.) But the Christian rule of right and wrong is the word of God, the writings of the Old and New Testament; all that the prophets and "holy men of old" wrote "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" all that Scripture which was "given by inspiration" of God, and which is indeed "profitable for doctrine," or teaching the whole will of God; "for reproof" of what is contrary thereto; for "correction" of error; and "for instruction," or training us up, "in righteousness." (2 Tim. iii. 16.)

This is a lantern unto a Christian's feet, and a light in all his paths. This alone he receives as his rule of right or wrong, of whatever is really good or evil. He esteems nothing good but what is here enjoined, either directly or by plain consequence; he accounts nothing evil but what is here forbidden, either in terms, or by undeniable inference. Whatever the Scripture neither forbids nor enjoins, either directly or by plain consequence, he believes to be of an indifferent nature; to be in itself neither good nor evil; this being the whole and sole outward rule whereby his conscience is to be directed in all things.

7 And if it be directed thereby in fact, then hath he

“the answer of a good conscience toward God.” “A good conscience” is what is elsewhere termed by the apostle, a “conscience void of offence.” So, what he at one time expresses thus, “I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day;” (Acts. xxiii. 1;) he denotes at another by that expression, “Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.” (Chap. xxiv. 16) Now, in order to this, there is absolutely required, first, a right understanding of the word of God, of his “holy, and acceptable, and perfect will” concerning us, as it is revealed therein. For it is impossible we should walk by a rule, if we do not know what it means. There is, secondly, required (which how few have attained!) a true knowledge of ourselves; a knowledge both of our hearts and lives, of our inward tempers and outward conversation: seeing, if we know them not, it is not possible that we should compare them with our rule. There is required, thirdly, an agreement of our hearts and lives, of our tempers and conversation, of our thoughts, and words, and works, with that rule, with the written word of God. For, without this, if we have any conscience at all, it can be only an evil conscience. There is, fourthly, required, an inward perception of this agreement with our rule: and this habitual perception, this inward consciousness itself, is properly a *good conscience*; or, in the other phrase of the apostle, “a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”

8. But whoever desires to have a conscience thus void of offence, let him see that he lay the right foundation. Let him remember, “other foundation” of this “can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.” And let him also be mindful, that no man buildeth on him but by a living faith; that no man is a partaker of Christ, until he can clearly testify, “The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God;” in him who is now *revealed* in my heart: who “loved me, and gave himself for me.” Faith alone is

that evidence, that conviction, that demonstration of things invisible, whereby, the eyes of our understanding being opened, and divine light poured in upon them, we "see the wondrous things of God's law;" the excellency and purity of it; the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof, and of every commandment contained therein. It is by faith that, beholding "the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," we perceive, as in a glass, all that is in ourselves, yea, the inmost motions of our souls. . And by this alone can that blessed love of God be "shed abroad in our hearts," which enables us so to love one another as Christ loved us. By this is that gracious promise fulfilled unto all the Israel of God, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write" (or engrave) "them in their hearts;" (Heb. viii. 10;) hereby producing in their souls an entire agreement with his holy and perfect law, and "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And, as an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit. As the heart, therefore, of a believer, so likewise his life, is thoroughly conformed to the rule of God's commandments; in a consciousness whereof, he can give glory to God, and say, with the apostle, "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

9. "We have had our conversation." The apostle, in the original, expresses this by one single word, *ἀνεστραφημεν*; but the meaning thereof is exceeding broad, taking in our whole deportment, yea, every inward as well as outward circumstance, whether relating to our soul or body. It includes every motion of our heart, of our tongue, of our hands, and bodily members. It extends to all our actions and words, to the employment of all our powers and faculties; to the manner of using every talent we have received, with respect either to God or man.

10. "We have had our conversation in the world;" even in the world of the ungodly: not only among the children of God; (that were comparatively a little thing;) but among the children of the devil, among those that lie in wickedness, *εν τῷ πονηρῷ*, *in the wicked one*. What a world is this! How thoroughly impregnated with the spirit it continually breathes! As our God is good, and doeth good, so the god of this world, and all his children, are evil, and do evil (so far as they are suffered) to all the children of God. Like their father, they are always lying in wait, or "walking about, seeking whom they may devour;" using fraud or force, secret wiles or open violence, to destroy those who are not of the world; continually warring against our souls, and, by old or new weapons, and devices of every kind, labouring to bring them back into the snare of the devil, into the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

11. "We have had our" whole "conversation," in such a world, "in simplicity and godly sincerity." First, in simplicity: this is what our Lord recommends under the name of a "single eye." "The light of the body," saith he, "is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." The meaning whereof is this: What the eye is to the body, that the intention is to all the words and actions: if, therefore, this eye of thy soul be single, all thy actions and conversation shall be "full of light," of the light of heaven, of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

We are then simple of heart, when the eye of our mind is singly fixed on God; when in all things we aim at God alone, as our God, our portion, our strength, our happiness, our exceeding great reward, our all, in time and eternity. This is simplicity; when a steady view, a single intention of promoting his glory, of doing and suffering his blessed will, runs through our whole soul, fills all our heart, and is the constant spring of all our thoughts, desires, and purposes.

12. "We have had our conversation in the world," secondly, "in godly sincerity." The difference between

simplicity and sincerity seems to be chiefly this: simplicity regards the intention itself, sincerity the execution of it; and this sincerity relates not barely to our words, but to our whole conversation, as described above. It is not here to be understood in that narrow sense, wherein St. Paul himself sometimes uses it, for speaking the truth, or abstaining from guile, from craft, and dissimulation; but in a more extensive meaning, as actually hitting the mark, which we aim at by simplicity. Accordingly, it implies in this place, that we do, in fact, speak and do all to the glory of God; that all our words are not only pointed at this, but actually conducive thereto; that all our actions flow on in an even stream, uniformly subservient to this great end; and that, in our whole lives, we are moving straight toward God, and that continually; walking steadily on in the highway of holiness, in the paths of justice, mercy, and truth.

13. This sincerity is termed by the apostle, "godly sincerity," or the sincerity of God; *εὐαγγελισία Θεοῦ*; to prevent our mistaking or confounding it with the sincerity of the heathens; (for they had also a kind of sincerity among them, for which they professed no small veneration;) likewise to denote the object and end of this, as of every Christian virtue, seeing whatever does not ultimately tend to God, sinks among "the beggarly elements of the world." By styling it the sincerity of God, he also points out the author of it, the "Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth;" which is still more clearly declared in the following words, "Not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God."

14. "Not with fleshly wisdom:" as if he had said, "We cannot thus converse in the world, by any natural strength of understanding, neither by any naturally acquired knowledge or wisdom. We cannot gain this simplicity, or practise this sincerity, by the force either of good sense, good nature, or good breeding. It overshoots all our native courage and resolution, as well as

all our precepts of philosophy. The power of custom is not able to train us up to this, nor the most exquisite rules of human education. Neither could I Paul ever attain hereto, notwithstanding all the advantages I enjoyed, so long as I was *in the flesh*, in my natural state, and pursued it only by *fleshly*, natural wisdom."

And yet, surely, if any man could, Paul himself might have attained thereto by that wisdom: for we can hardly conceive any who was more highly favoured with all the gifts both of nature and education. Besides his natural abilities, probably not inferior to those of any person then upon the earth, he had all the benefits of learning, studying at the University of Tarsus, afterwards brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a person of the greatest account, both for knowledge and integrity, that was then in the whole Jewish nation. And he had all the possible advantages of religious education; being a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, trained up in the very strictest sect or profession, distinguished from all others by a more eminent strictness. And herein he had "profited above many" others, "who were his equals" in years, "being more abundantly zealous" of whatever he thought would please God, and, "as touching the righteousness of the law, blameless." But it could not be that he should hereby attain this simplicity and godly sincerity. It was all but lost labour; in a deep, piercing sense of which he was at length constrained to cry out, "The things which were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." (Phil. iii. 7, 8.)

15. It could not be that ever he should attain to this, but by the "excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" our Lord; or "by the grace of God,"—another expression of nearly the same import. By "the grace of God" is sometimes to be understood that free love, that unmerited mercy, by which I, a sinner, through the merits of Christ, am now reconciled to God. But in this place, it rather means that power of God the Holy Ghost,

which "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." As soon as ever the grace of God in the former sense, his pardoning love, is manifested to our souls, the grace of God in the latter sense, the power of his Spirit, takes place therein. And now we can perform, through God, what to man was impossible. Now we can order our conversation aright. We can do all things in the light and power of that love, through Christ which strengtheneth us. We now have "the testimony of our conscience," which we could never have by fleshly wisdom, "that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have our conversation in the world."

16. This is properly the ground of a Christian's joy. We may now therefore readily conceive, how he that hath this testimony in himself rejoiceth evermore. "My soul," may he say, "doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." I rejoice in him, who, of his own unmerited love, of his own free and tender mercy, "hath called me into this state of salvation," wherein, through his power, I now stand. I rejoice, because his Spirit beareth witness to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb; and that, believing in him, "I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." I rejoice, because the sense of God's love to me hath, by the same Spirit, wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that he hath made. I rejoice, because he gives me to feel in myself "the mind that was in Christ:"—simplicity, a single eye to him, in every motion of my heart; power always to fix the loving eye of my soul on Him who "loved me, and gave himself for me;" to aim at him alone, at his glorious will, in all I think, or speak, or do:—purity, desiring nothing more but God; "crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts;" "setting my affections on things above, not on things of the earth:"—holiness, a recovery of the image of God, a renewal of soul "after his likeness:"—and godly sincerity, directing all my words and works, so as to con-

duce to his glory. In this I likewise rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, because my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the light he continually pours in upon it, that I "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called;" that I "abstain from all appearance of evil," fleeing from sin as from the face of a serpent; that as I have opportunity I do all possible good, in every kind, to all men; that I follow my Lord in all my steps, and do what is acceptable in his sight. I rejoice, because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is He who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in seeing through the light of God, which shines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways; and that through his grace, I turn not therefrom, to the right hand or to the left.

17. Such is the ground and the nature of that joy whereby an adult Christian rejoiceth evermore. And from all this we may easily infer, first, that this is not a *natural* joy. It does not arise from any natural cause: not from any sudden flow of spirits. This may give a transient start of joy; but the Christian *rejoiceth always*. It cannot be owing to bodily health or ease; to strength and soundness of constitution: for it is equally strong in sickness and pain; yea, perhaps far stronger than before. Many Christians have never experienced any joy to be compared with that which then filled their soul, when the body was wellnigh worn out with pain, or consumed away with pining sickness. Least of all can it be ascribed to outward prosperity, to the favour of men, or plenty of worldly goods; for then, chiefly, when their faith has been tried as with fire, by all manner of outward afflictions, have the children of God rejoiced in Him, whom unseen they loved, even with joy unspeakable. And never surely did men rejoice like those who were used as "the filth and offscouring of the world;" who wandered to and fro, being in want of all things; in hunger, in cold, in nakedness; who had trials, not only of "cruel mockings," but, "moreover

of bonds and imprisonments;" yea, who, at last, "counted not their lives dear unto themselves, so they might finish their course with joy."

18. From the preceding considerations, we may, secondly, infer, that the joy of a Christian does not arise from any blindness of conscience, from his not being able to discern good from evil. So far from it, that he was an utter stranger to this joy, till the eyes of his understanding were opened; that he knew it not, until he had spiritual senses, fitted to discern spiritual good and evil. And now the eye of his soul waxeth not dim: he was never so sharp-sighted before: he has so quick a perception of the smallest things, as is quite amazing to the natural man. As a mote is visible in the sunbeam, so to him who is walking in the light, in the beams of the uncreated Sun, every mote of sin is visible. Nor does he close the eyes of his conscience any more: that sleep is departed from him. His soul is always broad awake: no more slumber or folding of the hands to rest! He is always standing on the tower, and hearkening what his Lord will say concerning him; and always rejoicing in this very thing, in "seeing him that is invisible."

19. Neither does the joy of a Christian arise, thirdly, from any dulness or callousness of conscience. A kind of joy, it is true, may arise from this, in those whose "foolish hearts are darkened;" whose heart is callous, unfeeling, dull of sense, and consequently without spiritual understanding. Because of their senseless, unfeeling hearts, they may rejoice even in committing sin; and this they may probably call *liberty!*—which is indeed mere drunkenness of soul, a fatal numbness of spirit, the stupid insensibility of a seared conscience. On the contrary, a Christian has the most exquisite sensibility; such as he could not have conceived before. He never had such a tenderness of conscience as he has had since the love of God has reigned in his heart. And this also is his glory and joy, that God hath heard his daily prayer:—

“Oh that my tender soul might fly  
 The first abhorr'd approach of ill;  
 Quick as the apple of an eye,  
 The slightest touch of sin to feel!”

20. To conclude. Christian joy is joy in obedience; joy in loving God, and keeping his commandments: and yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the covenant of works; as if by any works or righteousness of ours, we were to procure pardon and acceptance with God. Not so: we are already pardoned and accepted through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Not as if we were by our own obedience to procure life, life from the death of sin: this also we have already through the grace of God. Us “hath he quickened, who were dead in sins;” and now we are “alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” But we rejoice in walking according to the covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing that, “being justified through his grace,” we have “not received that grace of God in vain;” that God having freely (not for the sake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run, in the strength which he hath given us, the way of his commandments. He hath “girded us with strength unto the war,” and we gladly “fight the good fight of faith.” We rejoice, through him who liveth in our hearts by faith, to “lay hold of eternal life.” This is our rejoicing, that as our “Father worketh hitherto,” so (not by our own might or wisdom, but through the power of his Spirit, freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the works of God. And may he work in us whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight! To whom be the praise for ever and ever!

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\*\*\* It may easily be observed that the preceding discourse describes the experience of those that are *strong* in faith: but hereby those that are *weak* in faith may be discouraged; to prevent which the following discourse [No. 13] may be of use.

## HIMSELF

How can a sinner know  
 His sin of \_\_\_\_\_?  
 How can my \_\_\_\_\_?  
 My name \_\_\_\_\_?  
 What we \_\_\_\_\_?  
 With \_\_\_\_\_?  
 And \_\_\_\_\_?  
 The \_\_\_\_\_?

We will \_\_\_\_\_  
 This \_\_\_\_\_  
 We are \_\_\_\_\_  
 And \_\_\_\_\_  
 Exult \_\_\_\_\_  
 In \_\_\_\_\_  
 And \_\_\_\_\_  
 Of \_\_\_\_\_

His \_\_\_\_\_  
 The \_\_\_\_\_  
 Within our hearts and \_\_\_\_\_  
 The gentle darts of death  
 Stronger than death and hell,  
 The mystic power we prove;  
 And, conquerors of the world, we stand  
 In heaven, who dwell in love

We by his Spirit prove  
 And know the things of God,  
 The things which freely of his love  
 He hath to us bestow'd:  
 His Spirit to us gave,  
 And since he is in us, we know  
 The witness to ourselves we have,  
 And of his gifts we show

knowl-

“Oh that my tender soul might fly  
The first abhorr'd approach of ill;  
Quick as the apple of an eye,  
The slightest touch of sin to feel!”

20. To conclude. Christian joy is joy in obedience; joy in loving God, and keeping his commandments: and yet not in keeping them, as if we were thereby to fulfil the terms of the covenant of works; as if by any works or righteousness of ours, we were to procure pardon and acceptance with God. Not so: we are already pardoned and accepted through the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Not as if we were by our own obedience to procure life, life from the death of sin: this also we have already through the grace of God. Us “hath he quickened, who were dead in sins;” and now we are “alive to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” But we rejoice in walking according to the covenant of grace, in holy love and happy obedience. We rejoice in knowing that, “being justified through his grace,” we have “not received that grace of God in vain;” that God having freely (not for the sake of our willing or running, but through the blood of the Lamb) reconciled us to himself, we run, in the strength which he hath given us, the way of his commandments. He hath “girded us with strength unto the war,” and we gladly “fight the good fight of faith.” We rejoice, through him who liveth in our hearts by faith, to “lay hold of eternal life.” This is our rejoicing, that as our “Father worketh hitherto,” so (not by our own might or wisdom, but through the power of his Spirit, freely given in Christ Jesus) we also work the works of God. And may he work in us whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight! To whom be the praise for ever and ever!

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## HYMN.

How can a sinner know  
 His sins on earth forgiven?  
 How can my gracious Saviour show  
 My name inscribed in heaven?  
 What we have felt and seen,  
 With confidence we tell;  
 And publish to the sons of men  
 The signs infallible.

We who in Christ believe  
 That he for us hath died,  
 We all his unknown peace receive,  
 And feel his blood applied;  
 Exults our rising soul,  
 Disburden'd of her load,  
 And swells unutterably full  
 Of glory and of God.

His love, surpassing far  
 The love of all beneath,  
 We find within our hearts, and dare  
 The pointless darts of death.  
 Stronger than death and hell,  
 The mystic power we prove;  
 And, conquerors of the world, we dwell  
 In heaven, who dwell in love.

We by his Spirit prove  
 And know the things of God,  
 The things which freely of his love  
 He hath on us bestow'd:  
 His Spirit to us he gave,  
 And dwells in us, we know:  
 The witness in ourselves we have,  
 And all its fruits we show.

The meek and lowly heart  
That in our Saviour was,  
To us his Spirit doth impart,  
And signs us with his cross :  
Our nature's turn'd, our mind  
Transform'd in all its powers ;  
And both the Witnesses are join'd,  
The Spirit of God with ours.

Whate'er our pardoning Lord  
Commands, we gladly do ;  
And, guided by his sacred word,  
We all his steps pursue :  
His glory our design,  
We live our God to please ;  
And rise, with filial fear divine,  
To perfect holiness.

16

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XII

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What is said to be the voice of the true believer in Christ?

Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What does he propose to show, and why?

Ques. 3. (§ 3.) What is said of the volumes written on conscience?

Ques. 4. (§ 4.) What has God made us?

Ques. 5. (§ 5.) What new name was given to conscience?

Ques. 6. (§ 5.) Which word does he prefer, and why?

Ques. 7. (§ 5.) What do we understand by conscience?

Ques. 8. (§ 6.) What is the rule of heathens? What is the Christian rule?

Ques. 9. (§ 7.) What is a good conscience?

Ques. 10. (§ 8.) What is necessary to this?

Ques. 11. (§ 9.) What does the apostle mean by "conversation?"

Ques. 12. (§ 10.) What is said of this world?

Ques. 13. (§ 11.) What is meant by the "single eye?"

Ques. 14. (§ 12.) What is said secondly of our conversation?

Ques. 15. (§ 13.) What is this sincerity called by the apostle?

Ques. 16. (§ 14.) What is meant by fleshly wisdom?

Ques. 17. (§ 14.) What is said of Paul's attaining it?

Ques. 18. (§ 15.) What is meant by "the excellent knowledge?"

Ques. 19. (§ 16.) Of what is this the ground?

Ques. 20. (¶ 17.) Is this a natural joy?

Ques. 21. (¶ 18.) What is the second inference?

Ques. 22. (¶ 19.) What is said of those whose foolish hearts are darkness?

Ques. 23. (¶ 20.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XIII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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WE have now reached a point in the theology of Mr. Wesley that requires close and accurate thinking if we avoid falling into error. If we make a mistake on one side we necessarily depreciate the work of regeneration, or the new birth. If we tend to the other extreme, we exalt this work of regeneration beyond its real character, and fall into the error of the Moravians who followed Count Zinzendorf. Perfectionism, which so far undervalues the new birth as to place it scarcely above true conviction and repentance, is the first danger. Confounding regeneration with sanctification is the second danger. Mr. Wesley's views were largely shaped by his own experience.

It is scarcely to be doubted that the providence of God permits some of his chosen teachers to pass through extraordinary trials of faith in order to perfect their conceptions of Christian doctrine. After a long course of intensely earnest and honest seeking, Mr. Wesley found peace in believing on the 24th of May, 1738. He had then, according to his own diary, a clear witness of the Spirit of God bearing witness with his own spirit that he was a child of God—that Christ died for him. For some weeks he had the victory over sin, and his soul was filled with joy. Any doubt that came to his mind was overcome by prayer and searching the Scriptures.

But only five months had passed away before we find Mr. Wesley writing these words to his brother Samuel: "Some measure of this faith, which bringeth salvation or victory

over sin, and which implies peace and trust in God through Christ, I now enjoy by his free mercy, though in very deed it is in me but as a grain of mustard-seed. For the *πληροφορία πιστεως*—the seal of the Spirit, the love of God shed abroad in my heart and producing joy in the Holy Ghost, joy which no man taketh away, joy unspeakable and full of glory—this witness of the Spirit I have not, but I wait patiently for it. I know many who have already received it; and having seen and spoken with a cloud of witnesses abroad as well as in my own country, I cannot doubt but that believers who wait and pray for it will find these scriptures fulfilled in themselves. My hope is that they will be fulfilled in me. I build on Christ, the Rock of Ages.”

Still later than this—in January, 1739—in still stronger words he repeated the above statement, and closed the extraordinary record with these lines: “From hence I conclude, though I have given and do give all my goods to feed the poor, I am not a Christian. Though I have endured hardship, though I have in all things denied myself and taken up my cross, I am not a Christian. My works are nothing; my sufferings are nothing; I have not the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. Though I have constantly used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian.”

When we remember that these words were written nearly ten months after his conversion, we cannot be surprised that they have greatly puzzled the biographers of Mr. Wesley. Most of these writers have passed by this phase of John Wesley's career, and the biographer who gives the facts in greatest detail does not attempt to explain them. Nevertheless we ought to consider this feature of his early Christian experience, and understand it if we can. In doing this let us follow his example, and search for the truth, wherever it may lead us.

If we examine his journal closely, and the statement of his experience, which he gave so frequently afterward, we

will find Mr. Wesley in the habit of indulging a self-scrutiny which denoted a mind that could not be satisfied with any thing short of moral certitude. These daily, almost hourly, processes of self-examination he placed upon record in his diary, and they naturally and necessarily reflected all the changes of mood and varieties of thought which he experienced. These rigorous criticisms spared nothing that passed through his mind. One consequence was that he was exposed to the danger of confounding temptation with actual sin. Then he found in himself occasions, if not the causes, of temptation; and it was natural that his sensitive conscience should pass the narrow boundary-line, and condemn himself for those errors and shortcomings which he afterward declared were "improperly called" *sins* of infirmity.

The first serious doubts and misgivings led him to take the journey to Germany, there to avail himself of the matured experience of the Moravians at Herrnhuth. The first impressions received from them tended to confirm him in the low estimate he had placed upon the work of the Spirit in his own soul. Contrasting the results of his own self-scrutiny with the glowing language and enthusiastic professions of the Moravians, it was almost inevitable that he should pronounce judgment against himself, because he could not use the confident language or the florid rhetoric of teachers who knew little of the Scriptures and less of human nature. We cannot restrain our feelings of sympathy, and sometimes of pity, for Mr. Wesley when we find him in the toils of these erratic brethren; but his singleness of heart and knowledge of the Scriptures saved him. Unsuspecting as he was, there were so many glaring deficiencies, not to use a stronger word, in life at Herrnhuth that he found himself thrown back at last upon the Bible and his own soul for a solution of the problem in his own experience.

He *did* find the solution, and the sermon we are now studying was the outcome of the conflict which he waged

with the errors of Zinzendorf. Mr. Wesley saw not only the unscriptural character of the main tenet, but the tendency of Zinzendorf's theology, which was toward Antinomianism of the boldest description. In the first place, the Moravians taught that there were no degrees in faith; that no man had any kind of faith until he was made a new creature in Christ Jesus. In the next place, Zinzendorf taught that all our perfection was in Christ, and that the perfect righteousness or holiness of Christ was imputed to us; and, finally, that the moment a man was justified he was sanctified, and from that moment until death there was no increase in holiness.

When Mr. Wesley emerged from the maze of doubts, difficulties, and perplexities in which his communion with the Germans had involved him, he saw the plain truth of the gospel, and proclaimed it with unfaltering purpose. Although the soul begins a new life at the hour of conversion, there remains not only the capacity for, but a tendency to, sin. The old Adam of active sin, of resistance to God and antagonism to holiness, is gone—buried with Christ by the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. But the Adamic fall is more than the ordering of a life, and the new birth is more than the change from one set of motives to another. After we have passed from death unto life, we are conscious that there remains a diseased moral nature whose allies are flesh and blood; and though these are conquered, they are not annihilated by the change which makes us children of God. Whether this moral nature—which he called sometimes "inbred sin," "inward sin," and by others is called "depravity"—will be utterly overthrown and exterminated until the last act in the final redemption of humanity, is a question to be discussed hereafter in some of its phases.

But does it not appear to be, in the order of Providence, necessary for Mr. Wesley to have experimental knowledge of that state of mind which has induced despair in some and false conceptions of the gospel in others? Could he

have given us a faithful portrait of our moral nature without having passed through those experiences which occasioned the sad and doubtful words we have quoted from his diary and letters?

What is more natural than the tendency to locate sin in the flesh of this mortal body when a converted soul finds itself in the midst of temptation and incitements to sin? The sagacious mind of Mr. Wesley analyzed his own experience, and finding himself not actually free from the warfare between good and evil, he searched the Scriptures, and was thereby led into the deep things of God. The aspirations of his soul for the higher life were accentuated by the doubts into which he had fallen; and when he once more threw himself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus the Spirit of power and of love and of a conscience undefiled manifested itself to him, and once more he was clothed with the spirit of rejoicing, having the peace that the world cannot give and cannot take away. Thus early in his career was the great question settled, and settled for all time. Guarding himself against the presumption which rests satisfied in the work already done, he saw the constant need of watchfulness, patience, and faith in the atoning blood of Christ.

Hereby many timid and doubting souls have been greatly comforted, and the example of a man whose zeal and labors approach the apostolic standard will breathe courage into the fainting spirit. The gospel has a balm for every wound and a promise for every soul that is struggling to escape the pollutions of the world that he may enter the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XIII.

I. Does, then, sin remain in the believer? An important question, to which the ancient Christians, the Church of England, the Greek and Roman Churches, and all the Churches of the Reformation give substantially one answer. The Moravians alone affirm that sin no longer remains in the

believer, or that if it remains in the flesh it does not in the heart.

II. The persons described are called regenerate, justified, or believers, as denoting actual change, relative change, or the means by which this is effected. This state is great and glorious, including regeneration, sonship, the indwelling of the Spirit, sanctifying grace, and power over sin.

III. But it does not include freedom from all sin, as appears—

1. From Scripture. Gal. v. 17; 1 Cor. i. 2, compared with chapter iii. 1-3; Rev. ii. 2, 3, 4, 13, 16, and iii. 2, etc.; 2 Cor. viii. 1.

2. From Christian experience.

3. From the universal testimony of the Church.

IV. Answers to opponents. All arguments founded on absolute interpretation of Scripture terms. It is the fallacy of arguing from a *particular* to a *general*.

V. Summary of Wesley's doctrine.

There are, even in the justified, two contrary principles—nature and grace. Babes in Christ are sanctified, but only in part. They are spiritual, but also carnal to some extent. Hence they need to watch against the flesh. The opposite doctrine is new and dangerous.

## SERMON XIII.

## ON SIN IN BELIEVERS.

“*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*”—2 COR. v. 17.

I. 1. Is there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin *remain* in one that believes in him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity; or that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmost moment to every serious Christian; the resolving of which very nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness.

2. And yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed, there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians, who have left us any thing in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are “strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,” have need to “wrestle with flesh and blood,” with an evil nature, as well as “with principalities and powers.”

3. And herein our own Church (as indeed in most points) exactly copies after the primitive; declaring in her Ninth Article, “Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρονημα σαρκος*, is not subject to

the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

4. The same testimony is given by all other Churches; not only by the Greek and Romish Church, but by every Reformed Church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed, some of these seem to carry the thing too far; so describing the corruption of heart in a believer, as scarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but rather is in bondage thereto; and, by this means, they leave hardly any distinction between a believer and an unbeliever.

5. To avoid this extreme, many well-meaning men, particularly those under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf, ran into another; affirming, that "all true believers are not only saved from the *dominion* of sin, but from the *being* of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer *remains* in them:" and from them, about twenty years ago, many of our countrymen imbibed the same opinion, that even the corruption of nature *is no more* in those who believe in Christ.

6. It is true that, when the Germans were pressed upon this head, they soon allowed, (many of them, at least,) that "sin did still remain *in the flesh*, but not *in the heart* of a believer:" and, after a time, when the absurdity of this was shown, they fairly gave up the point; allowing that sin did still remain, though not reign, in him that is born of God.

7. But the English, who had received it from them, (some directly, some at second or third hand,) were not so easily prevailed upon to part with a favourite opinion; and even when the generality of them were convinced it was utterly indefensible, a few could not be persuaded to give it up, but maintain it to this day.

II. 1. For the sake of those who really fear God, and desire to know "the truth as it is in Jesus," it may not be amiss to consider the point with calmness and impartiality. In doing this, I use indifferently the words, *regenerate*, *justified*, or *believers*; since, though

they have not precisely the same meaning, (the first implying an inward, actual change, the second a relative one, and the third the means whereby both the one and the other are wrought,) yet they come to one and the same thing; as every one that believes, is both justified and born of God.

2. By sin, I here understand inward sin; any sinful temper, passion, or affection; such as pride, self-will, love of the world, in any kind or degree; such as lust, anger, peevishness; any disposition contrary to the mind which was in Christ.

3. The question is not concerning *outward sin*; whether a child of God *commit sin*, or no. We all agree and earnestly maintain, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." We agree, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." Neither do we now inquire whether inward sin will *always* remain in the children of God; whether sin will continue in the soul as long as it continues in the body: nor yet do we inquire whether a justified person may *relapse* either into inward or outward sin; but simply this, Is a justified or regenerate man freed from *all sin* as soon as he is justified? Is there then no sin in his heart?—nor ever after, unless he fall from grace?

4. We allow that the state of a justified person is inexpressibly great and glorious. He is born again, "not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He is a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keepeth his heart and mind in Christ Jesus." His very body is a "temple of the Holy Ghost," and a "habitation of God through the Spirit." He is "created anew in Christ Jesus:" he is *washed*, he is *sanctified*. His heart is purified by faith; he is cleansed "from the corruption that is in the world;" "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him." And so long as he "walketh in love," (which he may always do,) he worships God in spirit and in

truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doeth those things that are pleasing in his sight; so exercising himself as to "have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men:" and he has power both over outward and inward sin, even from the moment he is justified.

III. 1. "But was he not then freed from all sin, so that there is no sin in his heart?" I cannot say this; I cannot believe it; because St. Paul says the contrary. He is speaking to believers, and describing the state of believers in general, when he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: these are contrary the one to the other." (Gal. v. 17.) Nothing can be more express. The apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate there are two principles, "contrary the one to the other."

2. Again: when he writes to the believers at Corinth, to those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, (1 Cor. i. 2,) he says, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. Ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal?" (iii. 1—3.) Now, here the apostle speaks unto those who were unquestionably believers,—whom, in the same breath, he styles his brethren in Christ,—as being still, in a measure, carnal. He affirms, there was envying, (an evil temper,) occasioning strife among them, and yet does not give the least intimation that they had lost their faith. Nay, he manifestly declares they had not; for then they would not have been "babes in Christ." And (what is most remarkable of all) he speaks of being carnal, and babes in Christ, as one and the same thing; plainly showing that every believer is (in a degree) carnal, while he is only a babe in Christ.

3. Indeed, this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers,—nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit,—runs through all the Epistles of St

Paul, yea, through all the holy Scriptures. almost all the directions and exhortations therein are founded on this supposition; pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these, by the power of the faith which was in them.

4. And who can doubt, but there was faith in the angel of the church at Ephesus, when our Lord said to him, "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience: thou hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted?" (Rev. ii. 2-4.) But was there, meantime, no sin in his heart? Yea, or Christ would not have added, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This was real sin which God saw in his heart; of which, accordingly, he is exhorted to *repent*: and yet we have no authority to say, that even then he had no faith.

5. Nay, the angel of the church at Pergamos, also, is exhorted to *repent*, which implies sin, though our Lord expressly says, "Thou hast not denied my faith." (Verses 13, 16.) And to the angel of the church in Sardis he says, "Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." The good which remained was *ready to die*, but was not actually dead. (Chap. iii. 2.) So there was still a spark of faith even in him; which he is accordingly commanded to *hold fast*. (Verse 3.)

6. Once more: when the apostle exhorts believers to "cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," (2 Cor. vii. 1,) he plainly teaches, that those believers were not yet cleansed therefrom.

Will you answer, "He that abstains from all appearance of evil does, *ipso facto*, cleanse himself from all filthiness?" Not in anywise. For instance: a man reviles me: I feel resentment, which is filthiness of spirit; yet I say not a word. Here I "abstain from all appearance of evil;" but this does not cleanse me from that filthiness of spirit, as I experience to my sorrow.

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xii. 22.) Yes; "and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect:" that is,

"Earth and heaven all agree,  
All is one great family."

And they are likewise holy and undefiled, while they "walk after the Spirit;" although sensible there is another principle in them, and that "these are contrary to each other."

7. "But Christians are reconciled to God. Now, this could not be, if any of the carnal mind remained; for this is enmity against God: consequently, no reconciliation can be effected, but by its total destruction."

We are "reconciled to God through the blood of the cross:" and in that moment the *φρονημα σαρκος*, the corruption of nature, which is enmity with God, is put under our feet; the flesh has no more dominion over us. But it still *exists*, and it is still in its nature enmity with God, lusting against his Spirit.

8. "But 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.'" (Gal. v. 24.) They have so; yet it remains in them still, and often struggles to break from the cross. "Nay, but they have 'put off the old man with his deeds.'" (Col. iii. 9.) They have; and, in the sense so described, "old things are passed away; all things become new." A hundred texts may be cited to the same effect; and they will all admit of the same use. "But, to say all in one word, I have him crucified in the church, that it might be holy without blame." (Eph. v. 25, 27.)

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7. And as this position, "There is no sin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backsliding," is thus contrary to the word of God, so it is to the experience of his children. These continually feel a heart bent to backsliding; a natural tendency to evil; a proneness to depart from God, and cleave to the things of earth. They are daily sensible of sin remaining in their heart,—pride, self-will, unbelief; and of sin cleaving to all they speak and do, even their best actions and holiest duties. Yet at the same time they "know that they are of God;" they cannot doubt of it for a moment. They feel his Spirit clearly "witnessing with their spirit, that they are the children of God." They "rejoice in God through Christ Jesus, by whom they have now received the atonement." So that they are equally assured, that sin is in them, and that "Christ is in them the hope of glory."

8. "But can Christ be in the same heart where sin is?" Undoubtedly he can; otherwise it never could be saved therefrom. Where the sickness is, there is the Physician,

"Carrying on his work within,  
Striving till he cast out sin."

Christ indeed cannot *reign* where sin *reigns*; neither will he *dwell* where any sin is *allowed*. But he *is* and *dwells* in the heart of every believer, who is *fighting against* all sin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

9. It has been observed before, that the opposite doctrine—that there is no sin in believers—is quite new in the church of Christ; that it was never heard of for seventeen hundred years; never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do not remember to have seen the least intimation of it, either in any ancient or modern writer; unless, perhaps, in some of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And these likewise say and unsay, acknowledging there is sin *in their flesh*, although no sin *in their heart*. But whatever doctrine is *new*

must be *wrong*; for the *old* religion is the only *true* one; and no doctrine can be right, unless it is the very same "which was from the beginning."

10. One argument more against this new, unscriptural doctrine, may be drawn from the dreadful consequences of it. One says, "I felt anger to-day." Must I reply, "Then you have no faith?" Another says, "I know what you advise is good, but my will is quite averse to it." Must I tell him, "Then you are an unbeliever, under the wrath and the curse of God?" What will be the natural consequence of this? Why, if he believe what I say, his soul will not only be grieved and wounded, but perhaps utterly destroyed; inasmuch as he will "cast away" that "confidence which hath great recompense of reward:" and having cast away his shield, how shall he "quench the fiery darts of the wicked one?" How shall he overcome the world?—seeing "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." He stands disarmed in the midst of his enemies, open to all their assaults. What wonder, then, if he be utterly overthrown; if they take him captive at their will; yea, if he fall from one wickedness to another, and never see good any more? I cannot, therefore, by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified; first, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture;—secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God;—thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday;—and, lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences; not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition.

IV. 1. However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments of those who endeavour to support it. And it is, first, from Scripture they attempt to prove that there is no sin in a believer. They argue thus: "The Scripture says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified, is pure in heart, has a new

heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, as 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh,' is altogether evil, so 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' is altogether good. Again: a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost."

I have put this objection as strong as possible, that its full weight may appear. Let us now examine it part by part. And, 1. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is altogether good." I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more,—that every man who is "born of the Spirit" is a spiritual man. He is so: but so he may be, and yet not be altogether spiritual. The Christians at Corinth were spiritual men; else they had been no Christians at all: and yet they were not altogether spiritual; they were still, in part, carnal.—"But they were fallen from grace." St. Paul says, No. They were even then babes in Christ. 2. "But a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy." Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. "Ye are washed," says the apostle, "ye are sanctified;" namely, cleansed from "fornication, idolatry, drunkenness," and all other outward sin; (1 Cor. vi. 9-11;) and yet, at the same time, in another sense of the word, they were unsanctified; they were not washed, not inwardly cleansed from envy, evil-surmising, partiality. "But, sure, they had not a new heart and an old heart together." It is most sure they had; for at that very time their hearts were *truly*, yet not *entirely*, renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross; yet it was not wholly destroyed. "But could they be unholy, while they were temples of the Holy Ghost?" Yes; that they were temples of the Holy Ghost is certain; (1 Cor. vi. 19;) and it is equally certain, they were, in some degree, carnal, that is, unholy.

2. "However, there is one scripture more which will put the matter out of question: 'If any man be a believer in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.' (2 Cor. v. 17.) Now, certainly, a man cannot be a new creature and an old creature at once." Yes, he may: he may be partly renewed, which was the very case with those at Corinth. They were doubtless "renewed in the spirit of their mind," or they could not have been so much as "babes in Christ;" yet they had not the whole mind which was in Christ, for they *envied* one another. "But it is said expressly, 'Old things are passed away; all things are become new.'" But we must not so interpret the apostle's words as to make him contradict himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this: His old judgment concerning justification, holiness, happiness, indeed concerning the things of God in general, is now passed away; so are his old desires, designs, affections, tempers, and conversation. All these are undeniably become new, greatly changed from what they were; and yet, though they are new, they are not wholly new. Still he feels, to his sorrow and shame, remains of the old man, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot gain any advantage over him, as long as he watches unto prayer.

3. This whole argument, "If he is clean, he is clean," "If he is holy, he is holy," (and twenty more expressions of the same kind may easily be heaped together,) is really no better than playing upon words: it is the fallacy of arguing from a *particular* to a *general*; of inferring a general conclusion from particular premises. Propose the sentence entire, and it runs thus; "If he is holy *at all*, he is holy *altogether*." That does not follow: every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin; yet not entirely: it *remains*, though it does not *reign*. If you think it does not *remain*, (in babes at least, whatever be the case

with young men or fathers,) you certainly have not considered the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the law of God; (even the law of love laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians;) and that every *avopia*, disconformity to, or deviation from, this law, is *sin*. Now, is there no disconformity to this in the heart or life of a believer? What may be in an adult Christian, is another question; but what a stranger must he be to human nature, who can possibly imagine, that this is the case with every babe in Christ!

4. "But believers walk after the Spirit,\* (Rom. viii. 1,) and the Spirit of God dwells in them; consequently, they are delivered from the guilt, the power, or, in one word, the being of sin."

These are coupled together, as if they were the same thing. But they are not the same thing. The *guilt* is one thing, the *power* another, and the *being* yet another. That believers are delivered from the *guilt* and *power* of sin, we allow; that they are delivered from the *being* of it, we deny. Nor does it in any wise follow from these texts. A man may have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and may "walk after the Spirit," though he still feels "the flesh lusting against the Spirit."

5 "But 'the church is the body of Christ;' (Col. i. 24;) this implies, that its members are washed from all filthiness; otherwise it will follow, that Christ and Belial are incorporated with each other."

Nay, it will not follow from hence, "Those who are the mystical body of Christ still feel the flesh lusting against the Spirit," that Christ has any fellowship with the devil, or with that sin which he enables them to resist and overcome.

6. "But are not Christians 'come to the heavenly Jerusalem,' where 'nothing defiled can enter?'" (Heb.

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\* What follows for some pages is an answer to a paper published in the Christian Magazine, pp. 577-582. I am surprised Mr. Dodd should give such a paper a place in his Magazine, which is directly contrary to our ninth Article.

xii. 22.) Yes; "and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect:" that is,

"Earth and heaven all agree,  
All is one great family."

And they are likewise holy and undefiled, while they "walk after the Spirit;" although sensible there is another principle in them, and that "these are contrary to each other."

7. "But Christians are reconciled to God. Now, this could not be, if any of the carnal mind remained; for this is enmity against God: consequently, no reconciliation can be effected, but by its total destruction."

We are "reconciled to God through the blood of the cross:" and in that moment the *φρονημα σαρκος*, the corruption of nature, which is enmity with God, is put under our feet; the flesh has no more dominion over us. But it still *exists*, and it is still in its nature enmity with God, lusting against his Spirit.

8. "But 'they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts.'" (Gal. v. 24.) They have so; yet it remains in them still, and often struggles to break from the cross. "Nay, but they have 'put off the old man with his deeds.'" (Col. iii. 9.) They have; and, in the sense above described, "old things are passed away; all things are become new." A hundred texts may be cited to the same effect; and they will all admit of the same answer. "But, to say all in one word, 'Christ gave himself for the church, that it might be holy, and without blemish.'" (Eph. v. 25, 27.) And so it will be in the end: but it never was yet, from the beginning to this day.

9. "But let experience speak: all who are justified do at that time find an absolute freedom from all sin." That I doubt: but, if they do, do they find it ever after? Else you gain nothing.—"If they do not, it is their own fault." That remains to be proved.

10. "But in the very nature of things, can a man

have pride in him, and not be proud; anger, and yet not be angry?"

A man may have *pride* in him, may think of himself in some particulars above what he ought to think, (and so be proud in that particular,) and yet not be a proud man in his general character. He may have *anger* in him, yea, and a strong propensity to furious anger, without *giving way* to it. "But can anger and pride be in that heart, where *only* meekness and humility are felt?" No: but *some* pride and anger may be in that heart, where there is much humility and meekness.

"It avails not, to say, 'These tempers are there, but they do not *reign*:' for sin cannot, in any kind or degree, exist where it does not reign; for *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin. Therefore, where one of them is, all must be."

Strange indeed! "Sin cannot, in any kind or degree, exist where it does not reign?" Absolutely contrary this to all experience, all Scripture, all common sense. Resentment of an affront is sin; it is *ανομία*, conformity to the law of love. This has existed in me a thousand times. Yet it did not, and does not, *reign*.—"But *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin; therefore, where one is, all must be." No: in the instance before us, if the resentment I feel is not yielded to, even for a moment, there is no guilt at all, no condemnation from God upon that account. And in this case, it has no *power*. Though it "lusteth against the Spirit," it cannot prevail. Here, therefore, as in ten thousand instances, there is *sin* without either *guilt* or *power*.

11. "But the supposing sin in a believer is pregnant with every thing frightful and discouraging. It implies the contending with a power that has the possession of our strength; maintains his usurpation of our hearts; and there prosecutes the war in defiance of our Redeemer." Not so: the supposing sin is in us, does not imply that it has the possession of our strength; no more than a man crucified has the possession of those

that crucify him. As little does it imply, that "sin maintains its usurpation of our hearts." The usurper is dethroned. He remains, indeed, where he once reigned; but remains *in chains*. So that he does, in some sense, "prosecute the war," yet he grows weaker and weaker; while the believer goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer.

12. "I am not satisfied yet: he that has sin in him, is a slave to sin. Therefore you suppose a man to be justified, while he is a slave to sin. Now, if you allow men may be justified while they have pride, anger, or unbelief in them; nay, if you aver, these are (at least for a time) in all that are justified; what wonder that we have so many proud, angry, unbelieving believers?"

I do not suppose any man who is justified is a slave to sin: yet I do suppose sin remains (at least for a time) in all that are justified.

"But, if sin remains in a believer, he is a sinful man: if pride, for instance, then he is proud; if self-will, then he is self-willed; if unbelief, then he is an unbeliever; consequently, no believer at all. How then does he differ from unbelievers, from unregenerate men?" This is still mere playing upon words. It means no more than, If there is sin, pride, self-will in him, then—there is sin, pride, self-will. And this nobody can deny. In that sense then he is proud, or self-willed. But he is not proud or self-willed in the same sense that unbelievers are; that is, *governed* by pride or self-will. Herein he differs from unregenerate men. They *obey* sin; he does not. Flesh is in them both: but they "walk after the flesh;" he "walks after the Spirit."

"But how can *unbelief* be in a believer?" That word has two meanings. It means either no faith, or little faith: either the *absence* of faith, or the *weakness* of it. In the former sense, unbelief is not in a believer; in the latter, it is in all babes. Their faith is commonly mixed with doubt or fear; that is, in the latter sense, with unbelief. "Why are ye fearful," says our Lord, "O ye of little faith?" Again: "O thou of little faith, where

fore didst thou doubt?" You see here was *unbelief* in *believers*; little faith and much unbelief.

13. "But this doctrine, that sin remains in a believer; that a man may be in the favour of God, while he has sin in his heart, certainly tends to encourage men in sin." Understand the proposition right, and no such consequence follows. A man may be in God's favour though he feel sin; but not if he *yields* to it. *Having sin* does not forfeit the favour of God; *giving way to sin* does. Though the flesh in you "lust against the Spirit," you may still be a child of God; but if you "walk after the flesh," you are a child of the devil. Now this doctrine does not encourage to *obey* sin, but to resist it with all our might.

V. 1. The sum of all this is: There are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. Hence, although even babes in Christ are *sanctified*, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet, in a degree they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch against the flesh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the constant experience of the children of God. While they feel this witness in themselves, they feel a will not wholly resigned to the will of God. They know they are in him; and yet find a heart ready to depart from him, a proneness to evil in many instances, and a backwardness to that which is good. The contrary doctrine is wholly new; never heard of in the church of Christ, from the time of his coming into the world, till the time of Count Zinzendorf: and it is attended with the most fatal consequences. It cuts off all watching against our evil nature; against the Delilah which we are told is gone, though she is still lying in our bosom. It tears away the shield of weak believers, deprives them of their faith, and so leaves them exposed to all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2. Let us, therefore, hold fast the sound doctrine

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“once delivered to the saints,” and delivered down by them, with the written word, to all succeeding generations,—that although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether; but the flesh, the evil nature, still *remains*, (though subdued,) and wars against the Spirit. So much the more let us use all diligence in “fighting the good fight of faith.” So much the more earnestly let us “watch and pray” against the enemy within. The more carefully let us take to ourselves, and “put on the whole armour of God;” that, although “we wrestle” both “with flesh and blood, and with principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in high places,” we “may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.’

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### QUESTIONS ON SERMON XIII.

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Ques. 1. (I. 1.) What is said of the importance of this question?

Ques. 2. (I. 2.) Was this doctrine disputed in the early Church?

Ques. 3. (I. 3.) What does he quote from the Church of England?

Ques. 4. (I. 4.) What is said of the Greek, Roman, and Reformed Churches of Europe?

Ques. 5. (I. 4.) To what extreme was the doctrine carried?

Ques. 6. (I. 5.) How did Zinzendorf avoid this extreme?

Ques. 7. (I. 6.) How did some of the Germans modify his doctrine?

Ques. 8. (I. 7.) What course did the English Moravians pursue?

Ques. 9. (II. 1.) How are the words regenerate, justified, believers, used?

Ques. 10. (II. 2.) What does Mr. Wesley mean by sin here?

Ques. 11. (II. 3.) How is the true question stated?

Ques. 12. (II. 4.) What is said of the state of a justified person?

Ques. 13. (III. 1.) Is he freed from all sin?

Ques. 14. (III. 2.) What quotations are here made?

Ques. 15. (III. 3.) What is said of the two conflicting principles?

Ques. 16. (III. 4.) What is said of the Church of Ephesus?

Ques. 17. (III. 5.) And of the Church of Pergamos?

- Ques. 18. (III. 6.) What is said of the apostle's exhortation?
- Ques. 19. (III. 7.) What is said of the experience of Christians?
- Ques. 20. (III. 8.) Can Christ and sin be in the same heart?
- Ques. 21. (III. 9.) Is the doctrine of Zinzendorf a new one?
- Ques. 22. (III. 10.) What further argument is used?
- Ques. 23. (IV. 1.) What is the first argument in favor of the doctrine of Zinzendorf?
- Ques. 24. (IV. 2.) What argument is based on the new creature in Christ Jesus? How is it answered?
- Ques. 25. (IV. 3.) What arguments are "playing upon words?"
- Ques. 26. (IV. 4.) What argument is founded on Romans viii. 1?
- Ques. 27. (IV. 5.) On Colossians i. 24?
- Ques. 28. (IV. 6.) On Hebrews xii. 22?
- Ques. 29. (IV. 7.) On reconciliation to God?
- Ques. 30. (IV. 8.) On Galatians v. 24?
- Ques. 31. (IV. 9.) What of the argument from experience?
- Ques. 32. (IV. 10.) What is said of pride and anger?
- Ques. 33. (IV. 11.) What consequences are asserted?
- Ques. 34. (IV. 12.) What further argument is presented?
- Ques. 35. (IV. 13.) Does the truth encourage sin?
- Ques. 36. (V. 1, 2.) What is the sum of the argument?

SERMON XIV  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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"THIS is another of the supplementary sermons," says Burwash, "added twenty years after the publication of the preceding, and putting the truth already defended into a practical form. Discarding the Antinomian idea that we need not trouble ourselves about this inward sin—because (1) it cannot be removed; (2) it is not imputed to us; and (3) our holiness is complete in Christ without its removal—Mr. Wesley insists:

"1. That a profound, searching conviction of this inward sin is an essential part of the experience of salvation; not a mere annoyance for which we may find compensation in the thought of a perfect imputed righteousness, but a work of grace leading us to a *real* full salvation.

"2. That the abiding faith by which a Christian lives in Christ is not a trust in an ideal perfect imputed righteousness, but a perception in Christ of saving power, able and willing to meet all the deep spiritual needs of our fallen nature. Religion is a *real* moral healing of the soul.

"Both Wesley and the Moravians had united mysticism with the evangelical doctrine of faith. But the Moravian mysticism was *quietist*, standing still and waiting for inward manifestations; that of Wesley was *ethical*, scrutinizing the motives of an active life. The faith of the Moravians looked to an imputed righteousness; that of Wesley wrought out by love both inward and outward righteousness. But Wesley's faith rested at bottom only on the merits of Christ, and all his motives of holy life had their root in a profound in-

ward manifestation of divine love. This great truth he learned from the Moravians; and here he and they agreed. But he expected the root to bud, and put forth branches, blossoms, and fruit. They were afraid the branches might impoverish the root."

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XIV.

The primary meaning of repentance and faith. A subsequent repentance and faith of somewhat different nature, but related, necessary to our continuance and growth in grace.

I. The repentance of believers is self-knowledge. The lack of this in the young Christian. Experience shows him—  
1. The remaining sin. (1) Of heart, pride, self-will, idolatrous love of the world in its threefold form, affections contrary to love, covetousness. Hence, sensible of these things, many apply the seventh of Romans to Christians. (2) Of words and acts—uncharitable and unprofitable conversation not here included, but useless discourse, mingled motives, spiritual pride. (3) Of omission. (4) Of defect. 2. The guiltiness of this. Were it not for the atoning blood, we must be condemned. 3. Our inability to remove either the sin or its desert before God.

II. The faith of believers is: 1. A faith in the ability of Christ to meet these conscious wants. 2. A faith in the willingness of Christ to meet them now. 3. A continuous faith, by which we feel the power of Christ resting upon us every moment.

III. *Lessons.* 1. Danger of the opinion that we are wholly sanctified when we are justified. 2. The necessity of a further change. 3. The constant need of the atoning blood. 4. The need of living upon Christ by faith.

## SERMON XIV.

## THE REPENTANCE OF BELIEVERS.

“*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*”—MARK i. 15.

1. IT is generally supposed that repentance and faith are only the gate of religion; that they are necessary only at the beginning of our Christian course, when we are setting out in the way to the kingdom. And this may seem to be confirmed by the great apostle, where, exhorting the Hebrew Christians to “go on to perfection,” he teaches them to *leave* these “first principles of the doctrine of Christ;” “not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God;” which must at least mean, that they should comparatively leave these, that at first took up all their thoughts, in order to “press forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

2. And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a repentance and a faith, which are more especially necessary at the beginning: a repentance, which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness; and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which, our Lord observes, is “within us;” and a faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

3. But, notwithstanding this, there is also a repentance and a faith (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different) which are requisite after we have “believed the gospel;” yea, and in every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot “run the race which is set

before us." And this repentance and faith are full as necessary, in order to our *continuance* and *growth* in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our *entering* into the kingdom of God.

But in what sense are we to repent and believe, after we are justified? This is an important question, and worthy of being considered with the utmost attention.

I. And, first, in what sense are we to repent?

1. Repentance frequently means an inward change, a change of mind from sin to holiness. But we now speak of it in a quite different sense, as it is one kind of self-knowledge, the knowing ourselves sinners, yea, guilty, helpless sinners, even though we know we are children of God.

2. Indeed, when we first know this; when we first find redemption in the blood of Jesus; when the love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts, and his kingdom set up therein; it is natural to suppose that we are no longer sinners, that all our sins are not only covered, but destroyed.

As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine none is there. Nay, some well-meaning men have imagined this not only at that time, but ever after; having persuaded themselves, that when they were justified, they were entirely sanctified; yea, they have laid it down as a general rule, in spite of Scripture, reason, and experience. These sincerely believe, and earnestly maintain, that all sin is destroyed when we are justified; and that there is no sin in the heart of a believer; but that it is altogether clean from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge, "he that believeth is born of God," and "he that is born of God doth not commit sin;" yet we cannot allow that he does not *feel* it within: it does not *reign*, but it does remain. And a conviction of the sin which *remains* in our heart, is one great branch of the repentance we are now speaking of.

3. For it is seldom long before he who imagined all sin was gone, feels there is still *pride* in his heart. He

is convinced both that in many respects he has thought of himself more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himself the praise of something he had received, and gloried in it as though he had not received it; and yet he knows he is in the favour of God. He cannot, and ought not to, "cast away his confidence." "The Spirit" still "witnesses with" his "spirit, that he is a child of God."

4. Nor is it long before he feels *self-will* in his heart; even a will contrary to the will of God. A will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an understanding. This is an essential part of human nature; indeed of the nature of every intelligent being. Our blessed Lord himself had a will as a man; otherwise he had not been a man. But his human will was invariably subject to the will of his Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, he could say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the will of God. He wills something, because it is pleasing to nature, which is not pleasing to God: and he nills (is averse from) something, because it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. Indeed, suppose he continues in the faith, he fights against it with all his might: but this very thing implies that it really exists, and that he is conscious of it.

5. Now self-will, as well as pride, is a species of *idolatry*; and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The same observation may be made concerning the *love of the world*. But this likewise even true believers are liable to feel in themselves; and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first "passes from death unto life," he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, "All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name." "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." But it is not so always. In J. 1. 3

ness of time he will feel again, though perhaps only for a few moments, either "the desire of the flesh," or "the desire of the eye," or "the pride of life." Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find *lust* reviving; yea, and thrusting sore at him that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He may feel the assaults of *inordinate affection*; yea, a strong propensity to "love the creature more than the Creator;" whether it be a child, a parent, a husband or wife, or "the friend that is as his own soul." He may feel, in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in him, and consequently being a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."

6. If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel *the desire of the eye*; the desire of gratifying his imagination with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul! Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles, such as dress or furniture; things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal spirit. Yet, how natural is it for us, even after we have "tasted of the powers of the world to come," to sink again into these foolish, low desires of things that perish in the using! How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, *curiosity*; constantly to trample it under their feet; to desire nothing merely because it is new!

7. And how hard it is even for the children of God wholly to conquer the *pride of life*! St. John seems to mean by this nearly the same with what the world terms "the sense of honour." This is no other than a desire of, and delight in, "the honour that cometh of men," a desire and love of praise; and, which is always joined with it, a proportionable *fear of dispraise*. Nearly allied to this is *evil shame*; the being ashamed of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the *fear of man*, which brings a thousand snares upon the

soul Now where is he, even among those that seem strong in faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers? So that even these are but in part "crucified to the world;" for the evil root still remains in their heart.

8. And do we not feel other tempers which are as contrary to the love of our neighbour as these are to the love of God? The love of our neighbour "thinketh no evil." Do not we find any thing of the kind? Do we never find any *jealousies*, any *evil surmisings*, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects, let him cast the first stone at his neighbour. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of *malice*, *hatred*, or *bitterness*, is there no touch of *envy*; particularly toward those who enjoy some real or supposed good, which we desire, but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of *resentment*, when we are injured or affronted; especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most laboured to help or oblige? Does injustice or ingratitude never excite in us any desire of *revenge*? any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of "overcoming evil with good?" This also shows, how much is still in our heart, which is contrary to the love of our neighbour.

9. *Covetousness*, in every kind and degree, is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God; whether *φιλαργυρια*, *the love of money*, which is too frequently "the root of all evil;" or *πλεονεξια*, literally, a desire of *having more*, or increasing in substance. And how few, even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both! Indeed, one great man, Martin Luthier, used to say, he "never had any covetousness in him" (not only in his converted state, but) "ever since he was born." But, if so, I would not scruple to say, he was the only man born of a woman, (except him that was God as well as man,) who had not, who was born without it. Nay, I believe, never was any one born of God.

that lived any considerable time after, who did not feel more or less of it many times, especially in the latter SCIENCE. We may therefore set it down as an undoubted truth, that covetousness, together with pride, and self-will, and anger, remain in the hearts even of them that are justified.

10. It is their experiencing this, which has inclined so many serious persons to understand the latter part of the seventh chapter to the Romans, not of them that are "under the law," that are convinced of sin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the apostle, but of them that are "under grace;" that are "justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ." And it is most certain, they are thus far right:—there does still *remain*, even in them that are justified, a *mind* which is in some measure *carnal*; (so the apostle tells even the believers at Corinth, "Ye are carnal;") a *heart bent to backsliding*, still ever ready to "depart from the living God;" a propensity to pride, self-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea, and all evil; a root of bitterness, which, if the restraint were taken off for a moment, would instantly spring up; yea, such a depth of corruption, as, without clear light from God, we cannot possibly conceive. And a conviction of all this sin *remaining in their hearts* is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

11. But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixed with sin; that they are sinful altogether: for such undoubtedly is all *uncharitable conversation*: all which does not spring from brotherly love; all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them." Of this kind is all backbiting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking, that is, repeating the faults of absent persons; for none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now, how few are there, even among believers, who are in

no degree guilty of this; who steadily observe the good old rule, "Of the dead and the absent, nothing but good!" And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from *unprofitable conversation*? Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and "grieves the Holy Spirit of God:" yea, and "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgment."

12. But let it be supposed that they continually "watch and pray," and so do "not enter into" this "temptation;" that they constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips; suppose they exercise themselves herein that *all* their "conversation may be in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers:" yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *intention*? Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please themselves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also? Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on "looking unto Jesus," and talking with Him all the time they are talking with their neighbour? When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any self-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward self-commendation,—"*Now you have spoke well?*" or any vanity,—a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on the account? In some or all of these respects, how much sin cleaves to the best *conversation* even of believers! The conviction of which is another branch of the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

13. And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to *their actions* also! Nay, are there not many of these, which, though

they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no, nor excused, if we judge by the word of God? Are there not many of their actions which, they themselves know, are not to the glory of God? many, wherein they did not even aim at this; which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of those that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not singly fixed on God? wherein they are doing their own will, at least as much as His; and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more, than to please God?—And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence, their good actions, so called, are far from being strictly such; being polluted with such a mixture of evil: such are their works of *mercy*. And is there not the same mixture in their works of *piety*? While they are hearing the word which is able to save their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts as make them afraid lest it should turn to their condemnation, rather than their salvation? Is it not often the same case, while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service, even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them! Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth; sometimes filled with such imaginations as make them fear lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord? So that they are now more ashamed of their best duties than they were once of their worst sins.

14. Again: how many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with! We know the words of the apostle: "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." But do they not know a thousand instances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty toward God! How many opportunities of communi-

cating, of hearing his word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected! So great reason had even that holy man, Archbishop Usher, after all his labours for God, to cry out, almost with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission!"

15. But besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves *inward defects* without number? defects of every kind. They have not the love, the fear, the confidence they ought to have, toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man; no, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God, whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought; they are defective in every thing;—in a deep consciousness of which, they are ready to cry out, with M. De Renty, "I am a ground all over-run with thorns;" or, with Job, "I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes."

16. A conviction of their *guiltiness* is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiously to be understood, and in a peculiar sense. For it is certain, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," that believe in him, and in the power of that faith, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Yet can they no more bear the *strict justice* of God now, than before they believed. This pronounces them to be still *worthy of death*, on all the preceding accounts. And it would absolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they still *deserve* punishment, although it is hereby turned aside from them. But here there are extremes on one hand and on the other, and few steer clear of them. Most men strike on one or the other, either thinking themselves condemned when they are not, or thinking they *deserve* to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between: they still *deserve*, strictly speaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they *deserve* does not

come upon them, because they "have an Advocate with the Father." His life, and death, and intercession still interpose between them and condemnation.

17. A conviction of their *utter helplessness* is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things: first, that they are no more able now *of themselves* to think one good thought, to form one good desire, to speak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were justified; that they have still no kind or degree of strength *of their own*; no power either to do good, or resist evil; no ability to conquer or even withstand the world, the devil, or their own evil nature. They can, it is certain, do all these things; but it is not by their own strength. They have power to overcome all these enemies; for "sin hath no more dominion over them:" but it is not from nature, either in whole or in part; it is the *mere* gift of God: nor is it given all at once, as if they had a stock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

18. By this helplessness I mean, secondly, an absolute inability to deliver ourselves from that guiltiness or desert of punishment whereof we are still conscious; yea, and an inability to remove, by all the grace we have, (to say nothing of our natural powers,) either the pride, self-will, love of the world, anger, and general proneness to depart from God, which we experimentally know to *remain* in the heart, even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which, in spite of all our endeavours, cleaves to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid uncharitable, and, much more, unprofitable, conversation; and an inability to avoid sins of omission, or to supply the numberless defects we are convinced of; especially the want of love, and other right tempers both to God and man.

19. If any man is not satisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is justified is able to remove these sins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try whether, by the grace he has already received, he can expel pride, self-will, or inbred sin in general

Let him try whether he can cleanse his words and actions from all mixture of evil ; whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, with all the sins of omission ; and, lastly, whether he can supply the numberless defects which he still finds in himself. Let him not be discouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again ; and the longer he tries, the more deeply will he be convinced of his utter helplessness in all these respects.

20. Indeed, this is so evident a truth, that wellnigh all the children of God scattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this ;—that although we may, “by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body ;” resist and conquer both outward and inward sin ; although we may *weaken* our enemies day by day ; yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, “Be clean :” and then only, the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed ; and inbred sin subsists no more. But if there be no such second change, if there be no instantaneous deliverance after justification, if there be *none but* a gradual work of God, (that there is a gradual work none denies,) then we must be content, as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death ; and, if so, we must remain guilty till death, continually *deserving* punishment. For it is impossible the guilt or desert of punishment should be removed from us, as long as all this sin remains in our heart, and cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous justice, all we think, and speak, and act, continually increases it.

II. 1. In this sense we are to *repent*, after we are justified. And till we do so, we can go no farther. For, till we are sensible of our disease, it admits of no cure. But, supposing we do thus repent, then are we called to “believe the gospel.”

2. And this also is to be understood in a peculiar sense, different from that wherein we believed in order to justification. Believe the glad tidings of great salvation, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that he who is "the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," is "able to save, unto the uttermost, all that come unto God through him." He is able to save you from all the sin that still remains in your heart. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to save you from sins of omission, and to supply whatever is wanting in you. It is true this is impossible with man; but with God-man all things are possible. For what can be too hard for Him who hath "all power in heaven and in earth?" Indeed, his bare power to do this is not a sufficient foundation for our faith that he will do it, that he will thus exert his power, unless he hath promised it. But this he has done: he has promised it over and over, in the strongest terms. He has given us these "exceeding great and precious promises," both in the Old and the New Testament. So we read in the law, in the most ancient part of the oracles of God, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul." (Deut. xxx. 6.) So in the Psalms, "He shall redeem Israel," the Israel of God, "from all his sins." So in the prophet, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. And I will put my Spirit within you, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses." (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.) So likewise in the New Testament, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us,—to perform the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteous

ness before him all the days of our life." Luke i. 68, &c.)

3. You have therefore good reason to believe, he is not only able, but willing to do this; to cleanse you from all your filthiness of flesh and spirit; to "save you from all your uncleannesses." This is the thing which you now long for; this is the faith which you now particularly need, namely, that the Great Physician, the lover of my soul, is willing to make me clean. But is he willing to do this to-morrow, or to-day? Let him answer for himself: "To-day, if ye will hear" my "voice, harden not your hearts." If you put it off till to-morrow, you harden your hearts; you refuse to hear his voice. Believe, therefore, that he is willing to save you *to-day*. He is willing to save you *now*. "Behold, now is the accepted time." He now saith, "Be thou clean!" Only believe, and you also will immediately find "all things are possible to him that believeth."

4. Continue to believe in him that loved thee, and gave himself for thee; that bore all thy sins in his own body on the tree; and he saveth thee from all condemnation, by his blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on "from faith to faith," when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that *guilt*, that *desert* of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say, not only,

"Every moment, Lord, I *want*  
The merit of thy death;"

but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

"Every moment, Lord, I *have*  
The merit of thy death!"

For, by that faith in his life, death, and intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit

clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives.

5. By the same faith we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby alone we are what we are; whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life; and without which, notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our faith in him, we "draw water out of the wells of salvation." Leaning on our Beloved, even Christ in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewise is ever interceding for us at the right hand of God, we receive help from him to think, and speak, and act, what is acceptable in his sight. Thus does he "prevent" them that believe, in all their "doings, and further them with his continual help:" so that all their designs, conversations, and actions are "begun, continued, and ended in him." Thus doth he "cleanse the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

6. Thus it is, that in the children of God, repentance and faith exactly answer each other. By repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions: by faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts, and cleansing our hands. By repentance we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers, and words, and actions: by faith, we are conscious that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no help in us: by faith we receive not only mercy, "but grace to help in" every "time of need." Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help: faith accepts all the help we stand in need of from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, "Without him I can do no

thing:" faith says, "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." Through Him I can not only overcome, but expel, all the enemies of my soul. Through Him I can "love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength;" yea, and "walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life."

III. 1. From what has been said, we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion,—that we are *wholly* sanctified when we are justified; that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered, as was observed before, from the dominion of outward sin; and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow, or be led by, it: but it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to backsliding, are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary, is not, as some may think, an innocent, harmless mistake. No: it does immense harm: it entirely blocks up the way to any further change; for it is manifest, "they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." If, therefore, we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any further healing. On this supposition, it is absurd to expect a further deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

2. On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole; that our hearts are not fully purified; that there is yet in us a "carnal mind," which is still in its nature "enmity against God;" that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed; shows, beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a further change. We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are *born again*: in that instant we experience that inward change from "darkness into marvellous light;" from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God; from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which

was in Christ Jesus. But are we then *entirely* changed? Are we *wholly* transformed into the image of him that created us? Far from it: we still retain a depth of sin; and it is the consciousness of this which constrains us to groan, for a full deliverance, to Him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly, and as it were notionally, convinced, have little concern about *entire sanctification*. They may possibly hold the opinion, that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time, they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneasiness for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shows them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then, and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

“Break off the yoke of inbred sin,  
And fully set my spirit free!  
I cannot rest till pure within,  
Till I am wholly lost in thee.”

3. We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our *demerit*, after we are accepted, (which, in one sense, may be termed *guilt*,) is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction we cannot but account the blood of the covenant as a *common thing*; something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which, of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that—

“He ever lives above,  
 For us to intercede,—  
 His all-atoning love,  
 His precious blood, to plead.”

It is this repentance, and the faith intimately connected with it, which are expressed in those strong lines,—

“I sin in every breath I draw,  
 Nor do thy will, nor keep thy law  
 On earth, as angels do above:  
 But still the fountain open stands,  
 Washes my feet, my heart, my hands,  
 Till I am perfected in love.”

4. We may observe, thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter *helplessness*, of our total inability to retain any thing we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to “magnify him,” indeed; to “give him all the glory of his grace;” to “make him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour; and truly to set the crown upon his head.” These excellent words, as they have frequently been used, have little or no meaning; but they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus, as it were, go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in him; when we sink into nothing, that He may be all in all. Then, his almighty grace having abolished “every high thing which exalted itself against him,” every temper, and thought, and word, and work, is brought to the obedience of Christ.”

LONDONDERRY, April 24, 1767.

## HYMN.

**BE** it according to thy word ;  
 This moment let it be !  
**O!** that I now, my gracious Lord,  
 Might lose my life for thee !

Now, Jesus, let thy powerful death  
 Into my being come ;  
 Slay the old Adam with thy breath ;  
 The man of sin consume.

Withhold whate'er my flesh requires ;  
 Poison my pleasant food ;  
 Spoil my delights, my vain desires,  
 My all of creature-good.

My old affections mortify ;  
 Nail to the cross my will ;  
 Daily and hourly bid me die,  
 Or altogether kill.

Jesus, my life, appear within,  
 And bruise the Serpent's head ;  
 Enter my soul, extirpate sin,  
 Cast out the cursed seed.

**O!** let it now make haste to die,  
 The mortal wound receive :  
**So** shall I live ; and yet not I,  
 But Christ in me, shall live.

**QUESTIONS ON SERMON XIV.**

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- Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What is said of repentance and faith?
- Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What is undoubtedly true?
- Ques. 3. (§ 3.) What of the subsequent repentance and faith?
- Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is frequently meant by repentance?
- Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What is here said would be natural to suppose?
- Ques. 6. (I. 2.) What error is here mentioned?
- Ques. 7. (I. 2.) Can sin exist without reigning?
- Ques. 8. (I. 3.) What is said of pride in the heart?
- Ques. 9. (I. 4.) And of self-will?
- Ques. 10. (I. 5.) Of what is self-will a species? What is idolatry?
- Ques. 11. (I. 6.) What follows if one does not keep himself?
- Ques. 12. (I. 7.) What is said of conquering the pride of life?
- Ques. 13. (I. 8.) Do we find other evil tempers?
- Ques. 14. (I. 9.) What is said of covetousness?
- Ques. 15. (I. 10.) Does the latter part of Romans vii. have any reference to regenerate persons? If so, what?
- Ques. 16. (I. 11.) What is said of words mixed with sin? What examples are given?
- Ques. 17. (I. 12.) What is said of useless discourse?
- Ques. 18. (I. 13.) What is said of sin cleaving to actions also?
- Ques. 19. (I. 14.) And of sins of omission?
- Ques. 20. (I. 15.) What of inward defects?

Ques. 21. (I. 16.) What forms another branch of repentance?

Ques. 22. (I. 17.) And still another?

Ques. 23. (I. 18.) What is meant by helplessness?

Ques. 24. (I. 19.) What experiment is here spoken of?

Ques. 25. (I. 20.) In what respect do almost all Christians agree?

Ques. 26. (II. 1.) What is said of repentance after justification?

Ques. 27. (II. 2.) What peculiar sense does it have?

Ques. 28. (II. 3.) What are we assured God is willing to do for us?

Ques. 29. (II. 4.) What exhortation follows here?

Ques. 30. (II. 5.) How do we feel the power of Christ?

Ques. 31. (II. 6.) How do repentance and faith stand toward each other?

Ques. 32. (III. 1.) What may we easily learn from the foregoing?

Ques. 33. (III. 2.) What deep conviction have we?

Ques. 34. (III. 3.) What do we learn secondly?

Ques. 35. (III. 4.) What may we observe thirdly?

SERMON XV.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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“THIS is another of the sermons added in Mr. Wesley’s final edition of the standard sermons. It is entirely free from dogmatic controversy,” says Prof. Burwash, “and is an admirable example of Mr. Wesley’s power to improve special occasions for the purpose of impressing divine truth on the minds of the people. It contains many opinions and forms of exposition which the author himself would be far from pressing as authoritative. It generally recites the language of Scripture; not therefore implying that this language is to be understood in a baldly literal sense, but leaving the interpretation to the day when God shall declare it.

“But this manner of preaching is of authority. And it evidently includes the following fundamental elements of doctrine:

“1. An unequivocal belief in a definite final judgment at the end of the present world. 2. A universal resurrection both of the just and the unjust preceding this. 3. A final and irrevocable separation between the righteous and the wicked. 4. That the basis of these sentences will be deeds of this life. 5. That the final estates thus determined will be immutable and eternal.

“To change any one of these propositions would be to destroy the entire significance and force of Mr. Wesley’s preaching. In fact, these dogmas enter into the very essence of his doctrine far more profoundly than they can in any system in which an antecedent decree of God really fixes

the final estates. In such a system there might be room for universalism or restorationism, but here none."

It is worthy of remark that Mr. Wesley was invited, after the sermon, to dine with Sir Edward Clive. This invitation was declined because of an appointment at Epworth the following night. He mounted his horse and rode thirty miles that day, and on Saturday, over execrable roads, traveled ninety miles in seventeen hours through rain and sleet. And this when he was in his fifty-sixth year!

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XV.

The solemnity of the present occasion and its outward expression. The far more awful solemnity of the final judgment. The effect which it should have on human society.

I. The circumstances preceding the judgment. The preceding signs. The general resurrection, which will be universal. The gathering of the elect and of all nations.

II. The judgment itself.

The Son of God is the Judge. The time called the day of the Lord may be of long duration; the plan not defined. The persons judged: all mankind, without exception, individually, and for all the acts, words, and thoughts. The righteous as well as the wicked impartially judged in light of all their deeds. The final sentences *immutable*.

III. The circumstances which follow:

1. The execution of the sentences. The passing away of the present order of things. This is not beyond the power of God. The new order of nature, in which sin shall be abolished with all its results, and holiness be universal.

IV. Application.

1. To the Judge. The honor and responsibility of his office. 2. To the officers. Their duty to God, to the king, and to the principles of justice. 3. To the entire assembly, solemnly calling them before the bar of God to meet the witness of their own conscience.

## SERMON XV.

## THE GREAT ASSIZE.

Preached at the Assizes held before the Honourable Sir Edward Clive, Knight, one of the Judges of His Majesty's Court of Common Pleas, in St. Paul's Church, Bedford, on Friday, March 10 1758; published at the request of William Cole, Esq., High Sheriff of the county, and others.

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*"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."*

ROMANS xiv. 10.

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1. How many circumstances concur to raise the awfulness of the present solemnity!—the general *concourse* of people of every age, sex, rank, and condition of life, willingly or unwillingly gathered together, not only from the neighbouring, but from distant parts; *criminals*, speedily to be brought forth, and having no way to escape; *officers*, waiting in their various posts, to execute the orders which shall be given; and the *representative* of our gracious *Sovereign*, whom we so highly reverence and honour. The *occasion* likewise of this assembly adds not a little to the solemnity of it: to hear and determine causes of every kind, some of which are of the most important nature; on which depends no less than life or death,—death that uncovers the face of eternity! It was, doubtless, in order to increase the serious sense of these things, and not in the minds of the vulgar only, that the wisdom of our forefathers did not disdain to appoint even several minute circumstances of this solemnity. For these also, by means of the eye or ear, may more deeply affect the heart: and when viewed in this light, trumpets, staves, apparel, are no longer trifling or insignificant, but subservient, in their kind and degree, to the most valuable ends of society.

2. But, as awful as this solemnity is, one far more awful is at hand. For yet a little while, and we "shall

all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." "For, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." And in that day, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

3. Had all men a deep sense of this, how effectually would it secure the interests of society! For what more forcible motive can be conceived to the practice of genuine morality? to a steady pursuit of solid virtue? an uniform walking in justice, mercy, and truth? What could strengthen our hands in all that is good, and deter us from all evil, like a strong conviction of this, "The Judge standeth at the door;" and we are shortly to stand before him?

4. It may not therefore be improper, or unsuitable to the design of the present assembly, to consider,

I. The chief circumstances which will precede our standing before the judgment-seat of Christ;

II. The judgment itself; and,

III. A few of the circumstances which will follow it.

1. Let us, in the first place, consider the chief circumstances which will precede our standing before the judgment-seat of Christ.

And, first, God will show "signs in the earth beneath;" (Acts ii. 19;) particularly he will "arise to shake terribly the earth." "The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage." (Isai. xxiv. 20.) "There shall be earthquakes," *κατα τοπους* (not in divers only, but) "in all places;" not in one only, or a few, but in every part of the habitable world; (Luke xxi. 11;) even "such as were not since men were upon the earth, so mighty earthquakes and so great." In one of these, "every island shall flee away, and the mountains will not be found." (Rev. xvi. 20.) Meantime all the waters of the terraqueous globe will feel the violence of those concussions; "the sea and waves roaring," (Luke xxi. 25.) with such an agitation as had never been known before, since the hour that "the fountains of the great deep were broken up," to destroy the earth, which then

“stood out of the water and in the water.” The air will be all storm and tempest, full of dark vapours and pillars of smoke; (Joel ii. 30;) resounding with thunder from pole to pole, and torn with ten thousand lightnings. But the commotion will not stop in the region of the air: “the powers of heaven also shall be shaken. There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars;” (Luke xxi. 25, 26;) those fixed, as well as those that move round them. “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.” (Joel ii. 31.) “The stars shall withdraw their shining,” (Joel iii. 15,) yea, and “fall from heaven,” (Rev. vi. 13,) being thrown out of their orbits. And then shall be heard the universal *shout*, from all the companies of heaven, followed by the “voice of the archangel,” proclaiming the approach of the Son of God and man, “and the trumpet of God” sounding an alarm to all that sleep in the dust of the earth. (1 Thess. iv. 16.) In consequence of this, all the graves shall open, and the bodies of men arise. The sea also shall give up the dead which are therein, (Rev. xx. 13,) and every one shall rise with “his own body:” his own in substance, although so changed in its properties as we cannot now conceive. “For this corruptible will” then “put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.” (1 Cor. xv. 53.) Yea, “death and hades,” the invisible world, shall “deliver up the dead that are in them.” (Rev. xx. 13.) So that all who ever lived and died, since God created man, shall be raised incorruptible and immortal.

2. At the same time, “the Son of man shall send forth his angels” over all the earth; and they shall “gather his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other.” (Matt. xxiv. 31.) And the Lord himself shall come with clouds in his own glory, and the glory of his Father, with ten thousand of his saints, even myriads of angels, and shall sit upon the throne of his glory. “And before him shall be gathered all

nations, and he shall separate them one from another, and shall set the sheep," the good, "on his right hand, and the goats," the wicked, "upon the left." (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.) Concerning this general assembly it is, that the beloved disciple speaks thus: "I saw the dead," all that had been dead, "small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened," (a figurative expression, plainly referring to the manner of proceeding among men,) "and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. xx. 12.)

II. These are the chief circumstances which are recorded in the oracles of God, as preceding the general judgment. We are, secondly, to consider the judgment itself, so far as it hath pleased God to reveal it.

1. The person by whom God will judge the world, is his only begotten Son, whose "goings forth are from everlasting;" "who is God over all, blessed for ever." Unto Him, being "the outbeaming of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," (Heb. i. 3,) the Father "hath committed all judgment, because he is the Son of man;" (John v. 22, 27;) because, though he was "in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet he emptied himself, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;" (Phil. ii. 6, 7;) yea, because, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself" yet further, "becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him," even in his human nature, and "ordained him," as man, to try the children of men, "to be the Judge both of the quick and dead;" both of those who shall be found alive at his coming, and of those who were before gathered to their fathers.

2. The time, termed by the prophet, "the great and the terrible day," is usually, in Scripture, styled *the day of the Lord*. The space from the creation of man upon the earth to the end of all things, is *the day of the sons of men*: the time that is now passing over us is properly

*our day*; when this is ended, *the day of the Lord* will begin. But who can say how long it will continue? "With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter iii. 8.) And from this very expression, some of the ancient fathers drew that inference, that, what is commonly called the day of judgment would be indeed a thousand years: and it seems they did not go beyond the truth; nay, probably they did not come up to it. For, if we consider the number of persons who are to be judged, and of actions which are to be inquired into, it does not appear that a thousand years will suffice for the transactions of that day; so that it may not improbably comprise several thousand years. But God shall reveal this also in its season.

3. With regard to the place where mankind will be judged, we have no explicit account in Scripture. An eminent writer (but not he alone; many have been of the same opinion) supposes it will be on earth, where the works were done, according to which they shall be judged; and that God will, in order thereto, employ the angels of his strength,—

"To smooth and lengthen out the boundless space,  
And spread an area for all human race."

But perhaps it is more agreeable to our Lord's own account of his coming in the clouds, to suppose it will be above the earth, if not "twice a planetary height." And this supposition is not a little favoured by what St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians: "The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who remain alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.) So that it seems most probable, the great white throne will be high exalted above the earth.

4. The persons to be judged, who can count, any more than the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea? "I beheld," saith St. John, "a great multitude which no man can number, clothed with white robes, and

palms in their hands." How immense then must be the total multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; of all that have sprung from the loins of Adam, since the world began, till time shall be no more! If we admit the common supposition, which seems no ways absurd, that the earth bears, at any one time, no less than four hundred millions of living souls, men, women, and children; what a congregation must all those generations make, who have succeeded each other for several thousand years!

"Great Xerxes' world in arms, proud Cannæ's host,  
They all are here; and here they all are lost.  
Their numbers swell to be discern'd in vain;  
Lost as a drop in the unbounded main."

Every man, every woman, every infant of days, that ever breathed the vital air, will then hear the voice of the Son of God, and start into life, and appear before him. And this seems to be the natural import of that expression, "the dead, small and great:" all universally, all without exception, all of every age, sex, or degree; all that ever lived and died, or underwent such a change as will be equivalent with death. For long before that day, the phantom of human greatness disappears, and sinks into nothing. Even in the moment of death, that vanishes away. Who is rich or great in the grave?

5. And every man shall there "give an account of his own works;" yea, a full and true account of all that he ever did while in the body, whether it was good or evil. Oh what a scene will then be disclosed, in the sight of angels and men!—while not the fabled Rhadamanthus, but the Lord God Almighty, who knoweth all things in heaven and in earth,—

*Castigatque, auditque dolos; subigitque fateri  
Quæ quis apud superos, furto lætatus inani,  
Distulit in seram commissa piacula mortem.\**

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\* "O'er these drear realms stern Rhadamanthus reigns,  
Detects each artful villain, and constrains  
To own the crimes, long veil'd from human sight:  
In vain! Now all stand forth in hated light."

§ 20 S

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Nor will the actions alone of every child of man be then brought to open view, but all their words; seeing "every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;" (Matt. xii. 36, 37;) so that "by thy words," as well as works, "thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Will not God then bring to light every circumstance also that accompanied every word or action, and if not altered the nature, yet lessened or increased the goodness or badness, of them? And how easy is this to Him who is "about our bed, and about our path, and spieth out all our ways!" We know "the darkness is no darkness to him, but the night shineth as the day."

6. Yea, he will bring to light, not the hidden works of darkness only, but the very thoughts and intents of the hearts. And what marvel? For he "searcheth the reins, and understandeth all our thoughts." "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." "Hell and destruction are before him without a covering. How much more the hearts of the children of men!"

7. And in that day shall be discovered every inward working of every human soul; every appetite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that constitute the whole complex character of each individual. So shall it be clearly and infallibly seen who was righteous, and who was unrighteous; and in what degree every action, or person, or character was either good or evil.

8. "Then the King will say to them upon his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me." In like manner, all the good they did upon earth will be recited before men and angels; whatsoever they had done, either in word or

deed, in the name, or for the sake, of the Lord Jesus. All their good desires, intentions, thoughts, all their holy dispositions, will also be then remembered; and it will appear, that though they were unknown or forgotten among men, yet God noted them in his book. All their sufferings likewise for the name of Jesus, and for the testimony of a good conscience, will be displayed unto their praise from the righteous Judge, their honour before saints and angels, and the increase of that "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

9. But will their evil deeds too, (since, if we take in his whole life, there is not a man on earth that liveth and sinneth not,) will these be remembered in that day, and mentioned in the great congregation? Many believe they will not; and ask, "Would not this imply, that their sufferings were not at an end, even when life ended?—seeing they would still have sorrow, and shame, and confusion of face to endure." They ask, further, "How can this be reconciled with God's declaration by the prophet,—'If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right; all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be once mentioned unto him?' (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22.) How is it consistent with the promise which God has made to all who accept of the gospel covenant,—'I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more?' (Jer. xxxi. 34:) or, as the apostle expresses it, 'I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more?'" (Heb. viii. 12.)

10. It may be answered, It is apparently and absolutely necessary, for the full display of the glory of God,—for the clear and perfect manifestation of his wisdom, justice, power, and mercy, toward the heirs of salvation,—that all the circumstances of their life should be placed in open view, together with all their tempers, and all the desires, thoughts, and intents of

their hearts: otherwise, how would it appear out of what a depth of sin and misery the grace of God had delivered them? And, indeed, if the whole lives of all the children of men were not manifestly discovered, the whole amazing contexture of divine providence could not be manifested; nor should we yet be able, in a thousand instances, "to justify the ways of God to man." Unless our Lord's words were fulfilled in their utmost sense, without any restriction or limitation,—"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, or hid that shall not be known," (Matt. x. 26),—abundance of God's dispensations under the sun would still appear without their reasons. And then only when God hath brought to light all the hidden things of darkness, whosoever were the actors therein, will it be seen that wise and good were all his ways; that he saw through the thick cloud, and governed all things by the wise counsel of his own will; that nothing was left to chance or the caprice of men, but God disposed all strongly and sweetly, and wrought all into one connected chain of justice, mercy, and truth.

11. And in the discovery of the divine perfections, the righteous will rejoice with joy unspeakable; far from feeling any painful sorrow or shame, for any of those past transgressions which were long since blotted out as a cloud, washed away by the blood of the Lamb. It will be abundantly sufficient for them, that all the transgressions which they had committed shall not be once mentioned unto them to their disadvantage; that their sins, and transgressions, and iniquities shall be remembered no more to their condemnation. This is the plain meaning of the promise; and this all the children of God shall find true, to their everlasting comfort.

12. After the righteous are judged, the King will turn to them upon his left hand; and they shall also be judged, every man according to his works. But not only their outward works will be brought into the ac

count, but all the evil words which they have ever spoken; yea, all the evil desires, affections, tempers, which have, or have had, a place in their souls; and all the evil thoughts or designs which were ever cherished in their hearts. The joyful sentence of acquittal will then be pronounced upon those upon the right hand; the dreadful sentence of condemnation upon those on the left; both of which must remain fixed and unmovable as the throne of God.

III. 1. We may, in the third place, consider a few of the circumstances which will follow the general judgment. And the first is the execution of the sentence pronounced on the evil and on the good: "These shall go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." It should be observed, it is the very same word which is used, both in the former and in the latter clause. It follows, that either the punishment lasts for ever, or the reward too will come to an end:—no, never, unless God could come to an end, or his mercy and truth could fail. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," "and shall drink of those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore." But here all description falls short; all human language fails! Only one who is caught up into the third heaven can have a just conception of it. But even such a one cannot express what he hath seen: these things it is not possible for man to utter.

The wicked, meantime, shall be turned into hell, even all the people that forget God. They will be "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." They will be "cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone," originally "prepared for the devil and his angels;" when they will gnaw their tongues for anguish and pain, they will curse God and look upward. There the dogs of hell—pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair—continually devour them. There "they have no rest, day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth

for ever and ever!" For "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

2. Then the heavens will be shrivelled up as a parchment scroll, and pass away with a great noise: they will "flee from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and there will be found no place for them." (Rev. xx 11.) The very manner of their passing away is disclosed to us by the apostle Peter: "In the day of God, the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved." (2 Peter iii. 12.) The whole beautiful fabric will be overthrown by that raging element, the connection of all its parts destroyed, and every atom torn asunder from the others. By the same, "the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up." (Verse 10.) The enormous works of nature, the everlasting hills, mountains that have defied the rage of time, and stood unmoved so many thousand years, will sink down in fiery ruin. How much less will the works of art, though of the most durable kind, the utmost efforts of human industry,—tombs, pillars, triumphal arches, castles, pyramids,—be able to withstand the flaming conqueror! All, all will die, perish, vanish away, like a dream when one awaketh!

3. It has indeed been imagined by some great and good men, that as it requires that same almighty power to annihilate things as to create; to speak into nothing or out of nothing; so no part of, no atom in, the universe, will be totally or finally destroyed. Rather, they suppose, that, as the last operation of fire, which we have yet been able to observe, is to reduce into glass what, by a smaller force, it had reduced to ashes; so, in the day God hath ordained, the whole earth, if not the material heavens also, will undergo this change, after which the fire can have no further power over them. And they believe this is intimated by that expression in the Revelation made to St. John: "Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal." (Rev. iv. 6.) We cannot now either affirm or deny this; but we shall know hereafter.

4. If it be inquired by the scoffers, the minute philosophers, "How can these things be? Whence should come such an immense quantity of fire as would consume the heavens and the whole terraqueous globe?" we would beg leave, first, to remind them, that this difficulty is not peculiar to the Christian system. The same opinion almost universally obtained among the *unbigoted* heathens. So one of those celebrated *free thinkers* speaks, according to the generally received sentiment:—

Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, affore tempus,  
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia cœli  
Ardeat, et mundi moles operosa laboret.\*

But, secondly, it is easy to answer, even from our slight and superficial acquaintance with natural things, that there are abundant magazines of fire ready prepared, and treasured up against the day of the Lord. How soon may a comet, commissioned by him, travel down from the most distant parts of the universe! And were it to fix upon the earth, in its return from the sun, when it is some thousand times hotter than a red-hot cannon-ball, who does not see what must be the immediate consequence? But, not to ascend so high as the ethereal heavens, might not the same lightnings which "give shine to the world," if commanded by the Lord of nature, give ruin and utter destruction? Or, to go no farther than the globe itself: who knows what huge reservoirs of liquid fire are from age to age contained in the bowels of the earth? *Ætna*, *Hecla*, *Vesuvius*, and all the other volcanoes that belch out flames and coals of fire, what are they, but so many proofs and mouths

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\* The following is Dryden's translation of this quotation from *Civil*:—

"Remembering, in the fates, a time when fire  
Should to the battlements of heaven aspire;  
And all the blazing world above should burn,  
And all the inferior globe to cinders turn."—*EDRV.*

of these fiery furnaces; and at the same time so many evidences that God hath in readiness wherewith to fulfil his word? Yea, were we to observe no more than the surface of the earth, and the things that surround us on every side, it is most certain (as a thousand experiments prove, beyond all possibility of denial) that we ourselves, our whole bodies, are full of fire, as well as every thing round about us. Is it not easy to make this ethereal fire visible even to the naked eye, and to produce thereby the very same effects on combustible matter which are produced by culinary fire? Needs there then any more than for God to unloose that secret chain, whereby this irresistible agent is now bound down, and lies quiescent in every particle of matter? And how soon would it tear the universal frame in pieces, and involve all in one common ruin!

5. There is one circumstance more, which will follow the judgment, that deserves our serious consideration. "We look," says the apostle, "according to his promise, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." (2 Peter iii. 13.) The promise stands in the prophecy of Isaiah: "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered;" (Isaiah lxv. 17);—so great shall the glory of the latter be! These St. John did behold in the visions of God. "I saw," saith he, "a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away." (Rev. xxi. 1.) And only righteousness dwelt therein. Accordingly, he adds, "And I heard a great voice from" the third "heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." (xxi. 3.) Of necessity, therefore, they will all be happy: "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." (xxi. 4.) "There shall be no more curse; but they shall see his face;"

(xxii. 3, 4;)—shall have the nearest access to, and thence the highest resemblance of, him. This is the strongest expression in the language of Scripture, to denote the most perfect happiness. “And his name shall be on their foreheads;” they shall be openly acknowledged as God’s own property, and his glorious nature shall most visibly shine forth in them. “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

IV. It remains only to apply the preceding considerations to all who are here before God. And are we not directly led so to do, by the present solemnity, which so naturally points us to that day, when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness? This, therefore, by reminding us of that more awful season, may furnish many lessons of instruction. A few of these I may be permitted just to touch on. May God write them on all our hearts!

1. And, first, how beautiful are the feet of those who are sent by the wise and gracious providence of God, to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured and punish the wrong-doer! Are they not the ministers of God to us for good; the grand supporters of the public tranquillity; the patrons of innocence and virtue; the great security of all our temporal blessings? And does not every one of these represent, not only an earthly prince, but the Judge of the earth? Him, whose “name is written upon his thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords?” O! that all these sons of the right hand of the Most High may be holy as he is holy! wise with the wisdom that sitteth by his throne, like Him who is the eternal Wisdom of the Father! no respecters of persons, as he is none; but rendering to every man according to his works; like Him inflexibly, inexorably just, though pitiful and of tender mercy! So shall they be terrible indeed to them that do evil, as not bearing the sword in vain. So shall the laws of our land have their

full use and due honour, and the throne of our King be still established in righteousness.

2. Ye truly honourable men, whom God and the king have commissioned, in a lower degree, to administer justice; may not ye be compared to those ministering spirits who will attend the Judge coming in the clouds? May you, like them, burn with love to God and man! May you love righteousness and hate iniquity! May ye all minister, in your several spheres, (such honour hath God given you also!) to them that shall be heirs of salvation, and to the glory of your great Sovereign! May ye remain the establishers of peace, the blessing and ornaments of your country, the protectors of a guilty land, the guardian angels of all that are round about you!

3. You, whose office it is to execute what is given you in charge by him before whom you stand; how nearly are you concerned to resemble those that stand before the face of the Son of man, those servants of his that do his pleasure, and hearken to the voice of his words! Does it not highly import you, to be as uncorrupt as they? to approve yourselves the servants of God? to do justly, and love mercy? to do to all as ye would they should do to you? So shall that great Judge, under whose eye you continually stand, say to you also, "Well done, good and faithful servants: enter ye into the joy of your Lord!"

4. Suffer me to add a few words to all of you who are at this day present before the Lord. Should not you bear it in your minds all the day long, that a more awful day is coming? A large assembly this! But what is it to that which every eye will then behold, the general assembly of all the children of men that ever lived on the face of the whole earth? A few will stand at the judgment-seat this day, to be judged touching what shall be laid to their charge; and they are now reserved in prison, perhaps in chains, till they are brought forth to be tried and sentenced. But "we shall all," I that speak and you that hear, "stand at the

judgment-seat of Christ." And we are now reserved on this earth, which is not our home, in this prison of flesh and blood, perhaps many of us in chains of darkness too, till we are ordered to be brought forth. Here a man is questioned concerning one or two facts, which he is supposed to have committed. There we are to give an account of all our works, from the cradle to the grave; of all our words; of all our desires and tempers, all the thoughts and intents of our hearts; of all the use we have made of our various talents, whether of mind, body, or fortune, till God said, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward." In this court, it is possible, some who are guilty may escape for want of evidence; but there is no want of evidence in that court. All men with whom you had the most secret intercourse, who were privy to all your designs and actions, are ready before your face. So are all the spirits of darkness, who inspired evil designs, and assisted in the execution of them. So are all the angels of God; those eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro over all the earth, who watched over your soul, and laboured for your good, so far as you would permit. So is your own conscience, a thousand witnesses in one, now no more capable of being either blinded or silenced, but constrained to know and to speak the naked truth, touching all your thoughts, and words, and actions. And is conscience as a thousand witnesses?—yea, but God is as a thousand consciences? Oh, who can stand before the face of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.

See! See! He cometh! He maketh the clouds his chariot. He rideth upon the wings of the wind! A devouring fire goeth before him, and after him a flame burneth! See! He sitteth upon his throne, clothed with light as with a garment, arrayed with majesty and honour! Behold, his eyes are as a flame of fire, his voice as the sound of many waters!

How will ye escape? Will ye call to the mountains to fall on you, the rocks to cover you? Alas! the

mountains themselves, the rocks, the earth, the heavens, are just ready to flee away? Can ye prevent the sentence? Wherewith? With all the substance of thy house, with thousands of gold and silver? Blind wretch! Thou camest naked from thy mother's womb, and more naked into eternity. Hear the Lord, the Judge! "Come, ye blessed of my Father! inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Joyful sound! How widely different from that voice which echoes through the expanse of heaven, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" And who is he that can prevent or retard the full execution of either sentence? Vain hope! Lo, hell is moved from beneath to receive those who are ripe for destruction. And the everlasting doors lift up their heads, that the heirs of glory may come in!

5. "What manner of persons then ought we to be, in all holy conversation and godliness?" We know it cannot be long before the Lord will descend with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God; when every one of us shall appear before him, and give account of his own works. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things," seeing ye know he will come and will not tarry, "be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless." Why should ye not? Why should one of you be found on the left hand at his appearing? He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; by repentance, to faith in a bleeding Lord; by faith, to spotless love, to the full image of God renewed in the heart, and producing all holiness of conversation. Can you doubt of this, when you remember the Judge of all is likewise the Saviour of all? Hath he not bought you with his own blood, that ye might not perish, but have everlasting life? Oh, make proof of his mercy, rather than his justice; of his love, rather than the thunder of his power! He is not far from every one of us; and he is now come, not to condemn, but to save the world. He standeth in the midst! Sinner, doth he not now,

even now, knock at the door of thy heart? Oh that thou mayest know, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! Oh that ye may now give yourselves unto Him who gave himself for you, in humble faith, in holy, active, patient love! So shall ye rejoice with exceeding joy in his day, when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

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## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XV.

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What circumstances made this an occasion of great solemnity?

Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What more solemn occasion does it suggest?

Ques. 3. (§ 3.) What effect would a proper sense of this produce?

Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is first considered?

Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What is here said of the great assize?

Ques. 6. (II. 1.) By whom is the world to be judged?

Ques. 7. (II. 2.) What is the time called in the Scripture?

Ques. 8. (II. 3.) What is said of the place?

Ques. 9. (II. 4.) And of the persons to be judged?

Ques. 10. (II. 5.) For what purpose are they to be assembled?

Ques. 11. (II. 6.) What will be brought to light?

Ques. 12. (II. 7.) What is said of the inward working of the soul?

Ques. 13. (II. 8.) What will the King say to those on the right?

Ques. 14. (II. 9.) What objection is made to the mention of evil deeds?

Ques. 15. (II. 10.) What is the answer to this objection?

Ques. 16. (II. 11.) What will be the effect of discovering the divine perfections?

Ques. 17. (II. 12.) What follows after the righteous are judged?

Ques. 18. (III. 1.) What circumstances follow the judgment?

Ques. 19. (III. 2.) What will become of the heavens?

Ques. 20. (III. 3.) What has been imagined by some great and good men?

Ques. 21. (III. 4.) What is said of scoffers?

Ques. 22. (III. 5.) What circumstance deserves serious consideration?

Ques. 23. (IV. I.) What is said of God's ministers?

Ques. 24. (IV. 2.) What is said to the judicial officers present?

Ques. 25. (IV. 3.) How does the preacher address them here?

Ques. 26. (IV. 4.) What is said to the audience?

Ques. 27. (IV. 5.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XVI.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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It is supposed that this sermon was first preached as early as 1740. Prof. Burwash says that "it originally stood next in order to the sermon on 'Sin in Believers,' forming with that sermon a complete refutation of the serious errors which led to the entire separation of Methodism from the Moravian Societies." We learn from Mr. Wesley's journal and his letters to his brother that Mr. Charles Wesley was at one time in great danger of falling into some of these Moravian errors. He was silent for some months, and gave his brother John no assistance whatever during this melancholy period. That his retirement was not wholly due to the gloomy seasons to which most persons of poetic temperament are subject appears from the letters to Mr. John Wesley. High-churchman though he was, Charles Wesley was for a short period attracted by the mysticism of the Moravians.

To be silent, waiting for the Spirit to perfect his work in the soul; to abstain from the Lord's Supper and all other ordinances and institutions; and to cease even from prayer and searching the Scriptures, were errors much more dangerous than those of the Quakers. Among a people of little education, and liable to be carried away by any plausible theory, it is not surprising that Mr. Wesley found the Society at Fetter Lane in a state of disorder and confusion. We learn from Mr. Tyerman that "Wesley preached a series of sermons: 1. On the delusion 'that weak faith is no faith.' 2. On the bold affirmation that there is but one commandment in the New Testament—namely, 'To believe.' 3. On the point

that Christians are subject to the ordinances of Christ. 4. On the fact that a man may be justified without being entirely sanctified. These discourses were followed by five others on reading the Scriptures, prayer, the Lord's Supper, and good works."

We have seen the renewal of these errors of the Moravians—or some of them, at least—among the followers of Mr. Alexander Campbell. It is boldly declared that a sinner has no *right* to pray; that this is of no avail so long as one is out of "the kingdom." According to these teachers, the first duty of a sinner is to believe, and then to be baptized. Baptism performed becomes the *title* of the soul to pardon, and it is given in the act of obedience to the divine command. No sinner has any right to partake of any ordinance of God until he has by baptism been introduced into the kingdom of Christ. The illustration of an alien entering into citizenship of our country is presented by Mr. Campbell as a full and satisfactory parallel. As the duties of citizenship are not obligatory upon an alien until he takes the oath of allegiance; as he cannot vote, hold office, or perform other acts peculiar to citizenship, so it is claimed that the ordinances of the Church are *inside* of the Church, and not *outside* of it.

On the other hand, in our time, as in Mr. Wesley's, there is undue importance attached to the ordinances. Baptism is made, not the sign, seal, and pledge of redeeming grace, but the *instrument* of regeneration. Without it, there is no spiritual cleansing; by means of it, the soul is transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. The Lord's Supper, after baptism, becomes the only means by which the Divine Spirit is communicated to the soul; and as the first ordinance began the Christian life, so the second continued and perfected it. By this doctrine the whole work of redemption and salvation is reduced to a mechanical process, in which material objects become the channels essential to the conveyance of divine blessing.

Mr. Wesley represents the Moravian form of error as follows: "As to the way of faith, you believe the way to attain it is to wait for Christ and be still—that is, not to use (what we term) the means of grace, not to go to church, not to communicate, not to fast, not to use so much private prayer, not to read the Scriptures, not to do temporal good, nor attempt doing spiritual good."

Against all these errors—the Antinomian, that will allow no act of the sinner previous to conversion except faith, that places repentance after faith—and the sacramentarian error that makes the ordinances the *only* channels of redeeming grace, it is only necessary to place the plain, unanswerable language of the Bible. While we do not deny that God may regenerate a believing soul in baptism, we hold that the grace of God is not restricted to any ordinance. While we acknowledge the spiritual benefits received by a proper use of the Lord's Supper, we deny that it is the only channel of God's sustaining and edifying grace. Using all the means as if dependent on them, and trusting in the Holy Spirit as if we were independent of them, we believe we attain to the truth as it is in Jesus.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XVI.

I. Are there any ordinances under the Christian dispensation? This question could not have been raised in the apostles' days. It grew out of the reaction against an age of mere outward forms. The protest against forms without the living spirit insensibly became a rejection of forms altogether.

II. The question considered.

Means of grace defined. Enumerated as prayer, searching the Scriptures, and the Lord's Supper. Their value depends on subserving the ends of religion. They are not a commutation for religion; cannot avail without the Spirit of God; cannot atone for sin; are often abused.

III. But still the word of God commands all who de-

sire the grace of God to wait for it in the use of the means.

1. In the way of prayer. Scripture proofs: Matt. vii. 7-11; Luke xi. 5-13; xviii. 1-5; Matt. vi. 6; James i. 5; iv. 2.

2. In searching the Scriptures. John v. 39; Acts xvii. 11, 12; 2 Tim. iii. 15-17; 2 Pet. i. 19.

3. In the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.; x. 16.

#### IV. Objections.

1. "Means cannot be used without trusting in them." God intended that we should trust them as *means*.

2. "This is seeking salvation by works." Not in the proper sense of *works*.

3. "Christ is the only means of grace." Not in the proper sense of *means*.

4. "We are to wait for salvation." Yes; but in the use of God's appointed means.

5. "Stand still and see," etc. Which they did by marching forward with all their might, etc.

6. If ye be dead with Christ, why are ye subject to ordinances? The ordinances of the Jewish law.

#### V. How shall we use the means?

1. In God's order—the word to convince, then prayer, finally the Lord's Supper. This should not be reversed, but we must be guided by indications of God's providence.

2. As to manner—placing God above the means, seeking him alone in the means, and avoiding all self-righteous trust.

## SERMON XVI.

## THE MEANS OF GRACE.

“*Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them.*”—MALACHI iii. 7.

I. 1. BUT are there any *ordinances* now, since life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel? Are there, under the Christian dispensation, any *means ordained* of God, as the usual channels of his *grace*? This question could never have been proposed in the apostolical church, unless by one who openly avowed himself to be a heathen; the whole body of Christians being agreed, that Christ had ordained certain outward means, for conveying his grace into the souls of men. Their constant practice set this beyond all dispute; for so long as “all that believed were together, and had all things common,” (Acts ii. 44,) “they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.” (Verse 42.)

2. But in process of time, when “the love of many waxed cold,” some began to mistake the *means* for the *end*, and to place religion, rather in doing those outward works, than in a heart renewed after the image of God. They forgot that “the end of” every “commandment is love, out of a pure heart,” with “faith unfeigned;” the loving the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves; and the being purified from pride, anger, and evil desire, by a “faith of the operation of God.” Others seemed to imagine, that though religion did not principally consist in these outward means, yet there was something in them where-with God was well pleased; something that would still make them acceptable in his sight, though they were

not exact in the weightier matters of the law, in justice, mercy, and the love of God.

3. It is evident, in those who abused them thus, they did not conduce to the end for which they were ordained: rather, the things which should have been for their health were to them an occasion of falling. They were so far from receiving any blessing therein, that they only drew down a curse upon their head; so far from growing more heavenly in heart and life, that they were twofold more the children of hell than before. Others, clearly perceiving that these means did not convey the grace of God to those children of the devil, began, from this particular case, to draw a general conclusion,—that they were not means of conveying the grace of God.

4. Yet the number of those who *abused* the ordinances of God was far greater than of those who *despised* them, till certain men arose, not only of great understanding, (sometimes joined with considerable learning,) but who likewise appeared to be men of love, experimentally acquainted with true, inward religion. Some of these were burning and shining lights, persons famous in their generations, and such as had well deserved of the church of Christ, for standing in the gap against the overflowings of ungodliness.

It cannot be supposed that these holy and venerable men intended any more, at first, than to show that outward religion is nothing worth, without the religion of the heart; that "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" that, therefore, external worship is lost labour, without a heart devoted to God; that the outward ordinances of God then profit much, when they advance inward holiness, but, when they advance it not, are unprofitable and void, are lighter than vanity; yea, that when they are used, as it were, *in the place of* this, they are an utter abomination to the Lord.

5. Yet it is not strange, if some of these, being strongly convinced of that horrid profanation of the ordinances of God, which had spread itself over the whole church.

and wellnigh driven true religion out of the world,—in their fervent zeal for the glory of God, and the recovery of souls from that fatal delusion,—spake as if outward religion were absolutely nothing, as if it had no place in the religion of Christ. It is not surprising at all, if they should not always have expressed themselves with sufficient caution; so that unwary hearers might believe they condemned all outward means, as altogether unprofitable, and as not designed of God to be the ordinary channels of conveying his grace into the souls of men.

Nay, it is not impossible, some of these holy men did, at length, themselves fall into this opinion, in particular those who, not by choice, but by the providence of God, were cut off from all these ordinances; perhaps wandering up and down, having no certain abiding-place, or dwelling in dens and caves of the earth. These, experiencing the grace of God in themselves, though they were deprived of all outward means, might infer that the same grace would be given to them who of set purpose abstained from them.

6. And experience shows how easily this notion spreads, and insinuates itself into the minds of men especially of those who are thoroughly awakened out of the sleep of death, and begin to feel the weight of their sins a burden too heavy to be borne. These are usually impatient of their present state; and, trying every way to escape from it, they are always ready to catch at any new thing, any new proposal of ease or happiness. They have probably tried most outward means, and found no ease in them; it may be, more and more of remorse, and fear, and sorrow, and condemnation. It is easy, therefore, to persuade these, that it is better for them to abstain from all those means. They are already weary of striving (as it seems) in vain, of labouring in the fire; and are therefore glad of any pretence to cast aside that wherein their soul has no pleasure, to give over the painful strife, and sink down into an indolent inactivity.

II. 1. In the following discourse, I propose to examine at large whether there be any means of grace

By "means of grace" I understand outward signs, words, or actions, ordained of God, and appointed for this end, to be the ordinary channels whereby he might convey to men, preventing, justifying, or sanctifying grace.

I use this expression, "means of grace," because I know none better; and because it has been generally used in the Christian church for many ages,—in particular by our own Church, which directs us to bless God both for the means of grace, and the hope of glory; and teaches us, that a sacrament is "an outward sign of inward grace, and a means whereby we receive the same."

The chief of these means are prayer, whether in secret or with the great congregation; searching the Scriptures; (which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon;) and receiving the Lord's supper, eating bread and drinking wine in remembrance of him: and these we believe to be ordained of God, as the ordinary channels of conveying his grace to the souls of men.

2. But we allow that the whole value of the means depends on their actual subservience to the end of religion; that, consequently, all these means, when separate from the end, are less than nothing and vanity; that if they do not actually conduce to the knowledge and love of God, they are not acceptable in his sight; yea, rather, they are an abomination before him, a stink in his nostrils; he is weary to bear them. Above all, if they are used as a kind of *commutation* for the religion they were designed to subserve, it is not easy to find words for the enormous folly and wickedness of thus turning God's arms against himself; of keeping Christianity out of the heart by those very means which were ordained for the bringing it in.

3. We allow, likewise, that all outward means whatever, if separate from the Spirit of God, cannot profit at all, cannot conduce, in any degree, either to the knowledge or love of God. Without controversy, the help that is done upon earth, He doeth it himself. It is He alone who, by his own almighty power, worketh in us what is pleasing in his sight; and all outward things, unless He work in them and by them, are mere weak

and beggarly elements. Whosoever, therefore, imagines, there is any intrinsic power in any means whatsoever, does greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, neither the power of God. We know that there is no inherent power in the words that are spoken in prayer, in the letter of Scripture read, the sound thereof heard, or the bread and wine received in the Lord's supper; but that it is God alone who is the Giver of every good gift, the Author of all grace: that the whole power is of Him, whereby, through any of these, there is any blessing conveyed to our souls. We know, likewise, that he is able to give the same grace, though there were no means on the face of the earth. In this sense, we may affirm, that, with regard to God, there is no such thing as means; seeing he is equally able to work whatsoever pleaseth him, by any, or by none at all.

4. We allow further, that the use of all means whatever will never atone for one sin; that it is the blood of Christ alone, whereby any sinner can be reconciled to God; there being no other propitiation for our sins, no other fountain for sin and uncleanness. Every believer in Christ is deeply convinced that there is no merit but in Him; that there is no merit in any of his own works; not in uttering the prayer, or searching the Scripture, or hearing the word of God, or eating of that bread and drinking of that cup. So that if no more be intended by the expression some have used, "Christ is the only means of grace," than this,—that He is the only meritorious cause of it, it cannot be gainsayed by any who know the grace of God.

5. Yet once more: we allow, though it is a melancholy truth, that a large proportion of those who are called Christians, do to this day abuse the means of grace to the destruction of their souls. This is doubtless the case with all those who rest content in the form of godliness, without the power. Either they fondly presume they are Christians already, because they do thus and thus,—although Christ was never yet revealed in their hearts, nor the love of God shed abroad therein:—or else they suppose they shall infallibly be so, barely

because they use these means ; idly dreaming, (though perhaps hardly conscious thereof,) either that there is some kind of *power* therein, whereby, sooner or later, (they know not when,) they shall certainly be made holy ; or that there is a sort of *merit* in using them, which will surely move God to give them holiness, or accept them without it.

6. So little do they understand that great foundation of the whole Christian building, "By grace are ye saved : " ye are saved from your sins, from the guilt and power thereof, ye are restored to the favour and image of God, not for any works, merits, or deservings of yours, but by the free grace, the mere mercy of God, through the merits of his well-beloved Son : ye are thus saved, not by any power, wisdom, or strength which is in you, or in any other creature ; but merely through the grace or power of the Holy Ghost, which worketh all in all.

7. But the main question remains : " We know this salvation is the gift and the work of God ; but how (may one say who is convinced he hath it not) may I attain thereto ? " If you say, " Believe, and thou shalt be saved ! " he answers, " True ; but how shall I believe ? " You reply, " Wait upon God. " " Well ; but how am I to wait ? " " In the means of grace, or out of them ? Am I to wait for the grace of God which bringeth salvation, by using these means, or by laying them aside ? "

8. It cannot possibly be conceived, that the word of God should give no direction in so important a point ; or, that the Son of God who came down from heaven for us men and for our salvation, should have left us undetermined with regard to a question wherein our salvation is so nearly concerned.

And, in fact, he hath not left us undetermined ; he hath shown us the way wherein we should go. We have only to consult the oracles of God ; to inquire what is written there ; and, if we simply abide by their decision, there can no possible doubt remain.

III. 1. According to this, according to the decision of holy writ, all who desire the grace of God are to wait

for it in the means which he hath ordained ; in using, not in laying them aside.

And, first, all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer. This is the express direction of our Lord himself. In his Sermon upon the Mount, after explaining at large wherein religion consists, and describing the main branches of it, he adds, " Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you ; for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matt. vii. 7, 8.) Here we are in the plainest manner directed to ask, in order to, or as a means of, receiving ; to seek, in order to find, the grace of God, the pearl of great price ; and to knock, to continue asking and seeking, if we would enter into his kingdom.

2. That no doubt might remain, our Lord labours this point in a more peculiar manner. He appeals to every man's own heart : " What man is there of you who, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone ? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven," the Father of angels and men, the Father of the spirits of all flesh, " give good things to them that ask him ?" (Verses 9-11.) Or, as he expresses himself, on another occasion, including all good things in one, " How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him ?" (Luke xi. 13.) It should be particularly observed here, that the persons directed to ask had not then received the Holy Spirit : nevertheless our Lord directs them to use this means, and promises that it should be effectual ; that upon asking they should receive the Holy Spirit, from him whose mercy is over all his works.

3. The absolute necessity of using this means, if we would receive any gift from God, yet further appears from that remarkable passage which immediately precedes these words : " And he said unto them," whom he had just been teaching how to pray, " Which of you

shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and shall say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: and he from within shall answer, Trouble me not; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you." (Luke xi. 5, 7-9.) "Though he will not give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." How could our blessed Lord more plainly declare, that we may receive of God, by this means, by importunately asking, what otherwise we should not receive at all?

4. "He spake also another parable, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint," till through his means they should receive of God whatsoever petition they asked of him: "There was in a city a judge which feared not God, neither regarded man. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me." (Luke xviii. 1-5.) The application of this our Lord himself hath made: "Hear what the unjust judge saith!" Because she continues to ask, because she will take no denial, therefore I will avenge her. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? I tell you he will avenge them speedily," if they pray and faint not.

5. A direction, equally full and express, to wait for the blessings of God in private prayer, together with a positive promise that, by this means, we shall obtain the request of our lips, he hath given us in those well-known words: "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." (Matt. vi. 6.)

6. If it be possible for any direction to be more clear,

it is that which God hath given us by the apostle, with regard to prayer of every kind, public or private, and the blessing annexed thereto: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally," if they ask; otherwise "ye have not, because ye ask not," (James iv. 2,) "and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James i. 5.)

If it be objected, "But this is no direction to unbelievers; to them who know not the pardoning grace of God: for the apostle adds, 'But let him ask in faith;' otherwise, 'let him not think that he shall receive anything of the Lord:'" I answer, The meaning of the word *faith*, in this place, is fixed by the apostle himself, as if it were on purpose to obviate this objection, in the words immediately following: "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering," nothing *doubting*, μηδεν διακρινόμενος: not doubting but God heareth his prayer, and will fulfil the desire of his heart.

The gross blasphemous absurdity of supposing *faith*, in this place, to be taken in the full Christian meaning, appears hence: it is supposing the Holy Ghost to direct a man who knows he has not this faith, (which is here termed *wisdom*,) to ask it of God, with a positive promise that "it shall be given him;" and then immediately to subjoin, "that it shall not be given him;" unless he have it before he asks for it! But who can bear such a supposition? From this scripture therefore, as well as those cited above, we must infer, that all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer.

7. Secondly. All who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

Our Lord's direction, with regard to the use of this means, is likewise plain and clear. "Search the Scriptures," saith he to the unbelieving Jews, "for they testify of me" (John v. 39.) And for this very end did he direct them to search the Scriptures, that they might believe in him.

The objection that "this is not a command, but only an assertion that they did search the Scriptures," is shamelessly false. I desire those who urge it, to let us

know how a command can be more clearly expressed, than in those terms, *Επειυατε τας γραφας*. It is as peremptory as so many words can make it.

And what a blessing from God attends the use of this means, appears from what is recorded concerning the Bereans; who, after hearing St. Paul, "searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed;"—found the grace of God, in the way which he had ordained. (Acts xvii. 11, 12.)

It is probable indeed, that in some of those who had "received the word with all readiness of mind," "faith came," as the same apostle speaks, "by hearing," and was only confirmed by reading the Scriptures: but it was observed above, that, under the general term of searching the Scriptures, both hearing, reading, and meditating are contained.

8. And that this is a means whereby God not only gives, but also confirms and increases, true wisdom, we learn from the words of St. Paul to Timothy: "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. iii. 15.) The same truth (namely, that this is the great means God has ordained for conveying his manifold grace to man) is delivered, in the fullest manner that can be conceived, in the words which immediately follow: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true; "and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:" to the end "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (Verses 16, 17.)

9. It should be observed, that this is spoken primarily and directly of the Scriptures which Timothy had known from a child; which must have been those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then wrote. How far then was St. Paul (though he was "not a whit behind the very chief of the apostles," nor, therefore, I presume, behind any man now upon earth) from making light of the Old Testament! Behold this, lest ye one day "wonder and perish," ye who make so small account

of one half of the oracles of God! Yea and that half of which the Holy Ghost expressly declares, that it is "profitable," as a means ordained of God for this very thing, "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" to the end, "the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

10. Nor is this profitable only for the men of God, for those who walk already in the light of his countenance; but also for those who are yet in darkness, seeking him whom they know not. Thus St. Peter: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy:" literally, "And we have the prophetic word more sure:" *Καὶ ἔχομεν βεβαιότερον τὸν προφητικὸν λόγον*; confirmed by our being "eye-witnesses of his majesty," and "hearing the voice which came from the excellent glory;" "unto which" prophetic word—so he styles the holy Scriptures—"ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Day-star arise in your hearts." (2 Peter i. 19.) Let all therefore who desire that day to dawn upon their hearts, wait for it in searching the Scriptures.

11. Thirdly. All who desire an increase of the grace of God are to wait for it in partaking of the Lord's supper: for this also is a direction himself hath given: "The same night in which he was betrayed he took bread, and brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body;" that is, the sacred sign of my body: "this do in remembrance of me." Likewise "he took the cup, saying, This cup is the new testament," or covenant, "in my blood;" the sacred sign of that covenant: "this do ye in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come;" (1 Cor. xi. 23, &c. :) ye openly exhibit the same, by these visible signs, before God, and angels, and men; ye manifest your solemn remembrance of his death, till he cometh in the clouds of heaven.

Only "let a man" first "examine himself," whether he understand the nature and design of this holy institution, and whether he really desire to be himself made conformable to the death of Christ; and so, nothing

doubting, "let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." (Verse 28.)

Here, then, the direction first given by our Lord is expressly repeated by the apostle: "Let him eat; let him drink;" (*εσθιτω, πινητω*, both in the imperative mood;) words not implying a bare permission only, but a clear, explicit command; a command to all those who either already are filled with peace and joy in believing, or can truly say, "The remembrance of our sins is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable."

12. And that this is also an ordinary, stated means of receiving the grace of God, is evident from those words of the apostle which occur in the preceding chapter: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion," or *communication*, "of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16.) Is not the eating of that bread, and the drinking of that cup, the outward, visible means whereby God conveys into our souls all that spiritual grace, that righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, which were purchased by the body of Christ once broken, and the blood of Christ once shed for us? Let all, therefore, who truly desire the grace of God, eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

IV. 1. But as plainly as God hath pointed out the way wherein he will be inquired after, innumerable are the objections which men, wise in their own eyes, have, from time to time, raised against it. It may be needful to consider a few of these; not because they are of weight in themselves, but because they have so often been used, especially of late years, to turn the lame out of the way; yea, to trouble and subvert those who did run well, till Satan appeared as an angel of light.

The first and chief of these is, "You cannot use these means (as you call them) without *trusting* in them." I pray where is this written? I expect you should show me plain Scripture for your assertion: otherwise I dare not receive it; because I am not convinced that you are wiser than God.

If it really had been as you assert, it is certain Christ

must have known it. And if he had known it, he would surely have warned us; he would have revealed it long ago. Therefore, because he has not, because there is no tittle of this in the whole revelation of Jesus Christ, I am as fully assured your assertion is false as that this revelation is of God.

"However, leave them off for a short time, to see whether you trusted in them or no." So I am to disobey God, in order to know whether I trust in obeying him! And do you avow this advice? Do you deliberately teach to "do evil, that good may come?" Oh, tremble at the sentence of God against such teachers! Their "damnation is just."

"Nay, if you are troubled when you leave them off, it is plain you trusted in them." By no means. If I am troubled when I wilfully disobey God, it is plain his Spirit is still striving with me: but if I am not troubled at wilful sin, it is plain I am given up to a reprobate mind.

But what do you mean by "*trusting* in them?"—looking for the blessing of God therein? believing, that if I wait in this way, I shall attain what otherwise I should not? So I do. And so I will, God being my helper, even to my life's end. By the grace of God I will *thus* trust in them, till the day of my death; that is, I will believe, that whatsoever God has promised, he is faithful also to perform. And seeing he hath promised to bless me in this way, I *trust* it shall be according to his word.

2. It has been, secondly, objected, "This is seeking salvation by works." Do you know the meaning of the expression you use? What is seeking salvation by works? In the writings of St. Paul, it means, either seeking to be saved by observing the ritual works of the Mosaic law; or expecting salvation for the sake of our own works, by the merit of our own righteousness. But how is either of these implied in my waiting in the way God has ordained, and expecting that he will meet me there, because he has promised so to do?

I do expect that he will fulfil his word, that he will meet and bless me in this way. Yet not for the sake of any works which I have done, not for the merit of my

righteousness; but merely through the merits, and sufferings, and love of his Son, in whom he is always well pleased.

3. It has been vehemently objected, thirdly, "that Christ is the only means of grace." I answer, This is mere playing upon words. Explain your term, and the objection vanishes away. When we say, "Prayer is a means of grace," we understand a channel through which the grace of God is conveyed. When you say, "Christ is the means of grace," you understand the sole price and purchaser of it; or, that "no man cometh unto the Father, but through him." And who denies it? But this is utterly wide of the question.

4. "But does not the Scripture" (it has been objected, fourthly) "direct us to *wait* for salvation? Does not David say, 'My soul waiteth upon God: for of him cometh my salvation?' And does not Isaiah teach us the same thing, saying, 'O Lord, we have waited for thee?'" All this cannot be denied. Seeing it is the gift of God, we are undoubtedly to *wait* on him for salvation. But how shall we wait? If God himself has appointed a way, can you find a better way of waiting for him? But that he hath appointed a way hath been shown at large, and also what that way is. The very words of the prophet, which you cite, put this out of all question. For the whole sentence runs thus:—"In the way of thy judgments," or ordinances, "O Lord, have we waited for thee." (Isaiah xxvi. 8.) And in the very same way did David wait, as his own words abundantly testify: "I have waited for thy saving health, O Lord, and have kept thy law. Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end."

5. "Yea," say some, "but God has appointed another way:—'Stand still, and see the salvation of God.'"

Let us examine the scriptures to which you refer. The first of them, with the context, runs thus:—

"And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes; and they were sore afraid. And they said unto Moses, Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not.

stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. And the Lord said unto Moses, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward. But lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it: and the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea." (Exodus xiv. 10, &c.)

This was the *salvation of God*, which they *stood still* to see, by *marching forward* with all their might!

The other passage, wherein this expression occurs, stands thus: "There came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea. And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation, in the house of the Lord.—Then upon Jahaziel came the Spirit of the Lord. And he said, Be not dismayed by reason of this great multitude. Tomorrow go ye down against them, ye shall not need to fight in this battle. Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Moab, Ammon, and Mount Seir;—and every one helped to destroy another." (2 Chron. xx. 2, &c.)

Such was the salvation which the children of Judah saw. But how does all this prove, that we ought not to wait for the grace of God in the means which he hath ordained?

6. I shall mention but one objection more, which, indeed, does not properly belong to this head: nevertheless, because it has been so frequently urged, I may not wholly pass it by.

"Does not St. Paul say, 'If ye be dead with Christ, why are ye subject to ordinances?' (Col. ii. 20.) Therefore a Christian, one that is dead with Christ, need not use the ordinances any more."

So you say, "If I am a Christian, I am not subject to the ordinances of Christ!" Surely, by the absurdity of

this, you must see at the first glance, that the ordinances here mentioned cannot be the ordinances of Christ; that they must needs be the Jewish ordinances, to which it is certain a Christian is no longer subject.

And the same undeniably appears from the words immediately following, "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" all evidently referring to the ancient ordinances of the Jewish law.

So that this objection is the weakest of all. And, in spite of all, that great truth must stand unshaken, that all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means which he hath ordained.

V. 1. But this being allowed, that all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means he hath ordained; it may still be inquired, how those means should be used, both as to the order and the manner of using them.

With regard to the former, we may observe, there is a kind of order, wherein God himself is generally pleased to use these means in bringing a sinner to salvation. A stupid, senseless wretch is going on in his own way, not having God in all his thoughts, when God comes upon him unawares, perhaps by an awakening sermon or conversation, perhaps by some awful providence, or it may be, by an immediate stroke of his convincing Spirit, without any outward means at all. Having now a desire to flee from the wrath to come, he purposely goes to *hear* how it may be done. If he finds a preacher who speaks to the heart, he is amazed, and begins searching the Scriptures, whether these things are so? The more he *hears* and *reads*, the more convinced he is; and the more he meditates thereon day and night. Perhaps he finds some other book which explains and enforces what he has heard and read in Scripture. And by all these means, the arrows of conviction sink deeper into his soul. He begins also to *talk* of the things of God, which are ever uppermost in his thoughts; yea, and to talk with God; to *pray* to him; although, through fear and shame, he scarce knows what to say. But whether he can speak or no, he cannot but pray, were it only in

"groans which cannot be uttered." Yet, being in doubt, whether "the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity" will regard such a sinner as him, he wants to pray with those who know God, with the faithful, in the great congregation. But here he observes others go up to the table of the Lord. He considers, "Christ has said, 'Do this!' How is it that I do not? I am too great a sinner. I am not fit. I am not worthy." After struggling with these scruples awhile, he breaks through. And thus he continues in God's way, in bearing, reading, meditating, praying, and partaking of the Lord's supper, till God, in the manner that pleases him, speaks to his heart, "Thy faith hath saved thee. Go in peace."

2. By observing this order of God, we may learn what means to recommend to any particular soul. If any of these will reach a stupid, careless sinner, it is probably hearing, or conversation. To such, therefore, we might recommend these, if he has ever any thought about salvation. To one who begins to feel the weight of his sins, not only hearing the word of God, but reading it, too, and perhaps other serious books, may be a means of deeper conviction. May you not advise him also to meditate on what he reads, that it may have its full force upon his heart? yea, and to speak thereof, and not be ashamed, particularly among those who walk in the same path? When trouble and heaviness take hold upon him, should you not then earnestly exhort him to pour out his soul before God; "always to pray, and not to faint?" and when he feels the worthlessness of his own prayers, are you not to work together with God, and remind him of going up into the house of the Lord, and praying with all that fear him? But if he does this, the dying word of his Lord will soon be brought to his remembrance; a plain intimation that this is the time when we should second the motions of the blessed Spirit. And thus we may lead him, step by step, through all the means which God has ordained; not according to our own will, but just as the providence and the Spirit of God go before and open the way.

3. Yet, as we find no command in holy writ for any particular order to be observed herein, so neither do the providence and the Spirit of God adhere to any without variation; but the means into which different men are led, and in which they find the blessing of God, are varied, transposed, and combined together, a thousand different ways. Yet still our wisdom is to follow the leadings of his providence and his Spirit; to be guided herein, (more especially as to the means wherein we ourselves seek the grace of God,) partly by his outward providence, giving us the opportunity of using sometimes one means, sometimes another, partly by our experience, which it is whereby his free Spirit is pleased most to work in our heart. And in the mean time, the sure and general rule for all who groan for the salvation of God is this,—Whenever opportunity serves, use all the means which God has ordained; for who knows in which God will meet thee with the grace that bringeth salvation?

4. As to the manner of using them, whereon indeed it wholly depends whether they shall convey any grace at all to the user; it behoves us, first, always to retain a lively sense that God is above all means. Have a care, therefore, of limiting the Almighty. He doeth whatsoever and whensoever it pleaseth him. He can convey his grace, either in or out of any of the means which he hath appointed. Perhaps he will. “Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?” Look then every moment for his appearing! Be it at the hour you are employed in his ordinances; or before, or after, that hour; or when you are hindered therefrom. He is not hindered; he is always ready, always able, always willing to save. “It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good!”

Secondly. Before you use any means, let it be deeply impressed on your soul, There is no *power* in this. It is, in itself, a poor, dead, empty thing: separate from God, it is a dry leaf, a shadow. Neither is there any *merit* in my using this: nothing intrinsically pleasing to God; nothing whereby I deserve any favour at his hands, no. not a drop of water to cool my tongue. But,

because God bids, therefore I do; because he directs me to wait, in this way, therefore here I wait for his free mercy whereof cometh my salvation.

Settle this in your heart, that the *opus operatum*, the mere *work done*, profiteth nothing; that there is no *power* to save, but in the Spirit of God, no *merit*, but in the blood of Christ; that, consequently, even what God ordains, conveys no *grace* to the soul, if you trust not in Him alone. On the other hand, he that does truly trust in Him cannot fall short of the *grace* of God, even though he were cut off from every outward ordinance, though he were shut up in the centre of the earth.

Thirdly. In using all means, seek God alone. In and through every outward thing, look singly to the *power* of his Spirit, and the *merits* of his Son. Beware you do not stick in the *work* itself: if you do, it is all lost labour. Nothing short of God can satisfy your soul. Therefore, eye him in all, through all, and above all

Remember also, to use all means *as means*; as ordained, not for their own sake, but in order to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness. If, therefore, they actually tend to this, well; but if not, they are dung and dross.

Lastly. After you have used any of these, take care how you value yourself thereon; how you congratulate yourself as having done some great thing. This is turning all into poison. Think, "if God was not there, what does this avail? Have I not been adding sin to sin? How long? O Lord! save, or I perish! Oh, lay not this sin to my charge!" If God was there, if his love flowed into your heart, you have forgot, as it were, the outward work. You see, you know, you feel, God is all in all. Be abased. Sink down before him. Give him all the praise. "Let God in all things be glorified through Christ Jesus." Let all your bones cry out, "My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be telling of thy truth from one generation to another!"

*QUESTIONS ON SERMON XVI.*

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- Ques. 1. (I. 1.) Are there any ordinances now?
- Ques. 2. (I. 2.) What followed when love waxed cold?
- Ques. 3. (I. 3.) Did the means conduce to the end?
- Ques. 4. (I. 4.) What is said of the relative number of those who abused and those who despised the ordinances?
- Ques. 5. (I. 5.) What error is here mentioned?
- Ques. 6. (I. 6.) Does this error spread readily?
- Ques. 7. (II. 1.) What do we understand by grace?
- Ques. 8. (II. 2.) On what does the value of the means depend?
- Ques. 9. (II. 3.) Of what service are the means of grace without the Holy Spirit?
- Ques. 10. (II. 4.) Can the means atone for any sin?
- Ques. 11. (II. 5.) Do many persons abuse them?
- Ques. 12. (II. 6.) Do they understand the gospel?
- Ques. 13. (II. 7.) What inquiry is here made?
- Ques. 14. (II. 8.) Is the Bible silent on this point?
- Ques. 15. (III. 1.) How are we first to wait for the grace of God?
- Ques. 16. (III. 2.) Does our Lord emphasize this point?
- Ques. 17. (III. 3.) How does this necessity appear?
- Ques. 18. (III. 4.) What scripture is here quoted?
- Ques. 19. (III. 5.) What other passage in this place?
- Ques. 20. (III. 6.) What is said of these texts? What bearing have these scriptures on Mr. Campbell's doctrine?
- Ques. 21. (III. 7.) What is the second duty?
- Ques. 22. (III. 8.) Does this means increase true wisdom?
- Ques. 23. (III. 9.) What should be observed?

Ques. 24. (III. 10.) Does this apply to those who are in darkness?

Ques. 25. (III. 11.) What is the third means of grace?

Ques. 26. (III. 12.) Is this an ordinary, stated means? Is there any command to take the Supper every Sabbath?

Ques. 27. (IV. 1.) Notwithstanding this, what is first objected?

Ques. 28. (IV. 2.) What is the second objection?

Ques. 29. (IV. 3.) What is the third?

Ques. 30. (IV. 4.) What is the fourth?

Ques. 31. (IV. 5.) What objection is here mentioned?

Ques. 32. (IV. 6.) What is the last objection?

Ques. 33. (V. 1.) What inquiry is here made?

Ques. 34. (V. 2.) What follows when the order of God is kept?

Ques. 35. (V. 3.) Is any particular order enjoined?

Ques. 36. (V. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XVII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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THIS sermon was preached before the University of Oxford in 1733. Two or three suggestions are worthy of notice. In the first place, we learn that a man may have a thorough scriptural conception of the gospel without enjoying its comfort and without having entered into the full redemption which it contains. In the next place, although Mr. Wesley was sincere and as thoroughly in earnest at the time of preaching this discourse as he was afterward, it did not arouse persecution or provoke resentment. Men do not object to lofty views of Bible truth. It is the bringing home of the truth to the personal conscience, and the consequent disturbance of the sleep of the soul, that offends. We learn, therefore, that preaching becomes to many an offense only when the preacher delivers his message with the power which heart-experience only can impart. The same sermon preached with little effect in 1733 would arouse persecution in 1740. The reason is obvious.

From this sermon, and another delivered about the same time on "Grieving the Spirit" (No. CXXXV.), Prof. Burwash gathers these points:

1. That his ideal of inward holiness was already very perfectly formed.
2. That it was an ethical, inwrought holiness, and not a mere imputed state.
3. That he ascribed it to the operation of the Holy Spirit.
4. That he laid considerable stress on our co-operating with the Spirit in this work.

5. That he did not yet distinguish between the preliminary, convicting work of the Spirit and regeneration.

6. That his conception of faith was general and indefinite, and hence the supplement to the definition, to which he calls attention in the foot-note.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XVII.

• General ignorance of the deeper truths of religion. They are known only by the Spirit of God, hence rejected by the natural man. Circumcision of the heart consists not in baptism or any other outward form, but in a right state of soul.

I. This state of the soul defined. Generally, as holiness. Specifically, as: (1) Humility, which, opposed to self-righteousness, convinces us of sin and of our own inability, from which follows disregard of worldly honor. (2) Faith, which reveals to us the Christian calling to glorify God and the power of God to quicken our souls dead in sin. This faith is an unshaken assent to all Scripture, but specially to the fact that Christ has atoned for sin; *and is furthermore "a revelation of Christ in our hearts . . . wrought in us by the Holy Ghost."* This faith delivers from the yoke of sin, gives strong consolation through hope, and strengthens us to purge the inmost recesses of the soul. (3) The perfection of this work requires charity, which is the love of God, which is not inconsistent with the love of our neighbor or with delight in God's gifts, but which makes God the supreme object of delight and desire, and seeks and enjoys all other things only as they tend to him.

II. How may I judge myself to possess this state?

1. Have I deep conviction of the corruption of my nature and my want of God? 2. Have I faith of the operation of God by his Spirit? 3. Have I a joyous witness of the Spirit? Those who possess not these things should deal faithfully with themselves. If we would see this kingdom of God we must strive, agonize.

The sum of the perfect law makes God the supreme object of affection, of desire, and of intention.

## SERMON XVII.

## THE CIRCUMCISION OF THE HEART.

PREACHED AT ST. MARY'S, OXFORD, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY  
JANUARY 1, 1788.

*"Circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter."*—ROMANS ii. 29.

1. It is the melancholy remark of an excellent man, that he who now preaches the most essential duties of Christianity runs the hazard of being esteemed, by a great part of his hearers, "a setter forth of new doctrines." Most men have so *lived away* the substance of that religion, the profession whereof they still retain, that no sooner are any of those truths proposed which differ the Spirit of Christ from the spirit of the world, than they cry out, "Thou bringest strange things to our ears; we would know what these things mean:"—though he is only preaching to them "Jesus and the resurrection," with the necessary consequence of it,—If Christ be risen, ye ought then to die unto the world, and live wholly unto God.

2. A hard saying this to the natural man, who is alive unto the world, and dead unto God; and one that he will not readily be persuaded to receive as the truth of God, unless it be so qualified in the interpretation, as to have neither use nor significancy left. He "receiveth not the" words "of the Spirit of God," taken in their plain and obvious meaning; "they are foolishness unto him: neither" indeed "can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned:"—they are perceivable only by that spiritual sense, which in him was never yet awakened: for want of which he must reject, as idle fancies of men, what are both the wisdom and the power of God.

3. That "circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter,"—that the distinguishing mark of a true follower of Christ, of one who is in a state of acceptance with God, is not either outward circumcision, or baptism, or any other outward form, but a right state of soul, a mind and spirit renewed after the image of Him that created it,—is one of those important truths that can only be spiritually discerned. And this the apostle himself intimates in the next words,—“Whose praise is not of men, but of God.” As if he had said, “Expect not, whoever thou art, who thus followest thy great Master, that the world, the men who follow him not, will say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant!’ Know that the circumcision of the heart, the seal of thy calling, is foolishness with the world. Be content to wait for thy applause till the day of thy Lord’s appearing. In that day shalt thou have praise of God, in the great assembly of men and angels.”

I design, first, particularly to inquire wherein this circumcision of the heart consists; and secondly, to mention some reflections that naturally arise from such an inquiry.

I. 1. I am, first, to inquire wherein that circumcision of the heart consists, which will receive the praise of God. In general we may observe, it is that habitual disposition of soul which, in the sacred writings, is termed holiness; and which directly implies the being cleansed from sin, “from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit;” and, by consequence, the being endued with those virtues which were also in Christ Jesus; the being so “renewed in the spirit of our mind,” as to be “perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.”

2. To be more particular: Circumcision of heart implies humility, faith, hope, and charity. Humility, a right judgment of ourselves, cleanses our minds from those high conceits of our own perfections, from that undue opinion of our own abilities and attainments, which are the genuine fruit of a corrupted nature. This

entirely cuts off that vain thought, "I am rich, and wise, and have need of nothing;" and convinces us that we are by nature "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." It convinces us, that in our best estate we are, of ourselves, all sin and vanity; that confusion, and ignorance, and error reign over our understanding; that unreasonable, earthly, sensual, devilish passions usurp authority over our will; in a word, that there is no whole part in our soul, that all the foundations of our nature are out of course.

3. At the same time we are convinced, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to help ourselves; that, without the Spirit of God, we can do nothing but add sin to sin; that it is He alone who worketh in us by his almighty power, either to will or do that which is good; it being as impossible for us even to think a good thought, without the supernatural assistance of his Spirit, as to create ourselves, or to renew our whole souls in righteousness and true holiness.

4. A sure effect of our having formed this right judgment of the sinfulness and helplessness of our nature, is a disregard of that "honour which cometh of man," which is usually paid to some supposed excellency in us. He who knows himself, neither desires nor values the applause which he knows he deserves not. It is therefore "a very small thing with him, to be judged by man's judgment." He has all reason to think, by comparing what it has said, either for or against him, with what he feels in his own breast, that the world, as well as the god of this world, was "a liar from the beginning." And even as to those who are not of the world; though he would choose, if it were the will of God, that they should account of him as of one desirous to be found a faithful steward of his Lord's goods, if haply this might be a means of enabling him to be of more use to his fellow-servants, yet as this is the one end of his wishing for their approbation, so he does not at all rest upon it: for he is assured, that whatever God wills, he can never want instruments to perform; since he is able,

even of these stones, to raise up servants to do his pleasure

5. This is that lowliness of mind, which they have learned of Christ, who follow his example and tread in his steps. And this knowledge of their disease, whereby they are more and more cleansed from one part of it, pride and vanity, disposes them to embrace, with a willing mind, the second thing implied in circumcision of the heart,—that faith which alone is able to make them whole, which is the one medicine given under heaven to heal their sickness.

6. The best guide of the blind, the surest light of them that are in darkness, the most perfect instructor of the foolish, is faith. But it must be such a faith as a "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strongholds,"—to the overturning all the prejudices of corruption, all the false maxims revered among men, all evil customs and habits, all that "wisdom of the world which is foolishness with God;" as "casteth down imaginations," reasonings, "and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

7. "All things are possible to him that" thus "believeth." "The eyes of his understanding being enlightened," he sees what is his calling; even to glorify God, who hath bought him with so high a price, in his body and in his spirit, which now are God's by redemption, as well as by creation. He feels what is "the exceeding greatness of his power," who, as he raised up Christ from the dead, so is able to quicken us, dead in sin, "by his Spirit which dwelleth in us." "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith;" that faith, which is not only an unshaken assent to all that God hath revealed in Scripture,—and in particular to those important truths, "Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners;" "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole

world;”\*—but likewise the revelation of Christ in our hearts; a divine evidence or conviction of his love, his free, unmerited love to me a sinner; a sure confidence in his pardoning mercy, wrought in us by the Holy Ghost; a confidence, whereby every true believer is enabled to bear witness, “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” that I have an “Advocate with the Father,” and that “Jesus Christ the righteous” is my Lord, and “the propitiation for my sins,”—I know he hath “loved me, and given himself for me,”—He hath reconciled me, even me, to God; and I “have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.”

8. Such a faith as this cannot fail to show evidently the power of Him that inspires it, by delivering his children from the yoke of sin, and “purging their consciences from dead works;” by strengthening them so, that they are no longer constrained to obey sin in the desires thereof; but, instead of “yielding their members unto it, as instruments of unrighteousness,” they now “yield themselves” entirely “unto God, as those that are alive from the dead.”

9. Those who are thus by faith born of God have also strong consolation through hope. This is the next thing which the circumcision of the heart implies; even the testimony of their own spirit with the Spirit which witnesses in their hearts that they are the children of God. Indeed it is the same Spirit who works in them that clear and cheerful confidence that their heart is upright toward God; that good assurance, that they now do, through his grace, the things which are acceptable in his sight; that they are now in the path which leadeth to life, and shall, by the mercy of God, endure therein to the end. It is he who giveth them a lively expectation of receiving all good things at God’s hand; a joyous prospect of that crown of glory which is reserved in heaven for them. By this anchor a Christian is kept

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\* N B.—The following part of this paragraph is now added to the Sermon formerly preached.

steady in the midst of the waves of this troublesome world, and preserved from striking upon either of those fatal rocks,—presumption or despair. He is neither discouraged by the misconceived severity of his Lord, nor does he “despise the riches of his goodness.” He neither apprehends the difficulties of the race set before him to be greater than he has strength to conquer, nor expects them to be so little as to yield in the conquest till he has put forth all his strength. The experience he already has in the Christian warfare, as it assures him his “labour is not in vain,” if “whatever his hand findeth to do, he doeth it with his might;” so it forbids his entertaining so vain a thought, as that he can otherwise gain any advantage; as that any virtue can be shown, any praise attained, by faint hearts and feeble hands; or, indeed, by any but those who pursue the same course with the great apostle of the Gentiles: “I,” says he, “so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

10. By the same discipline is every good soldier of Christ to inure himself to endure hardship. Confirmed and strengthened by this, he will be able not only to renounce the works of darkness, but every appetite too, and every affection, which is not subject to the law of God. For “every one,” saith St. John, “who hath this hope, purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” It is his daily care, by the grace of God in Christ, and through the blood of the covenant, to purge the inmost recesses of his soul from the lusts that before possessed and defiled it; from uncleanness, and envy, and malice, and wrath; from every passion and temper that is after the flesh, that either springs from or cherishes his native corruption: as well knowing, that he whose very body is the temple of God ought to admit into it nothing common or unclean; and that holiness becometh that house for ever where the Spirit of holiness vouchsafes to dwell

11. Yet lackest thou one thing, whosoever thou art, that to a deep humility, and a steadfast faith, hast joined a lively hope, and thereby in a good measure cleansed thy heart from its inbred pollution. If thou wilt be perfect, add to all these, charity; add love, and thou hast the circumcision of the heart. "Love is the fulfilling of the law, the end of the commandment." Very excellent things are spoken of love: it is the essence, the spirit, the life of all virtue. It is not only the first and great command, but it is all the commandments in one. "Whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are amiable," or honourable; "if there be any virtue, if there be any praise," they are all comprised in this one word,—love. In this is perfection, and glory, and happiness. The royal law of heaven and earth is this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

12. Not that this forbids us to love any thing besides God: it implies that we love our brother also. Nor yet does it forbid us (as some have strangely imagined) to take pleasure in any thing but God. To suppose this, is to suppose the Fountain of holiness is directly the author of sin; since he has inseparably annexed pleasure to the use of those creatures which are necessary to sustain the life he has given us. This, therefore, can never be the meaning of his command. What the real sense of it is, both our blessed Lord and his apostles tell us too frequently and too plainly, to be misunderstood. They all with one mouth bear witness, that the true meaning of those several declarations, "The Lord thy God is one Lord;" "Thou shalt have no other gods but me;" "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy strength;" "Thou shalt cleave unto him;" "The desire of thy soul shall be to his name;"—is no other than this: The one perfect God shall be your one ultimate end. One thing shall ye desire for its own sake,—the fruition of Him that is All in all. One happiness shall ye propose to your souls, even a union

with Him that made them ; the having "fellowship with the Father and the Son ;" the being joined to the Lord in one Spirit. One design you are to pursue to the end of time, the enjoyment of God in time and in eternity. Desire other things, so far as they tend to this. Love the creature as it leads to the Creator. But in every step you take, be this the glorious point that terminates your view. Let every affection, and thought, and word, and work be subordinate to this. Whatever ye desire or fear, whatever ye seek or shun, whatever ye think, speak, or do, be it in order to your happiness in God, the sole End, as well as Source, of your being.

13. Have no end, no ultimate end, but God. Thus our Lord : "One thing is needful ;" and if thine eye be singly fixed on this one thing, "thy whole body shall be full of light." Thus St. Paul : "This one thing I do ; I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus." Thus St. James : "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners ; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Thus St. John : "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The seeking happiness in what gratifies either the desire of the flesh, by agreeably striking upon the outward senses ; the desire of the eye, of the imagination, by its novelty, greatness, or beauty ; or the pride of life, whether by pomp, grandeur, power, or, the usual consequence of them, applause and admiration ;—"is not of the Father," cometh not from, neither is approved by, the Father of spirits ; "but of the world : " it is the distinguishing mark of those who will not have Him to reign over them.

II. 1. Thus have I particularly inquired, what that circumcision of heart is, which will obtain the praise of God. I am, in the second place, to mention some reflections that naturally arise from such an inquiry, as a plain rule whereby every man may judge of himself, whether he be of the world or of God

And, first, it is clear from what has been said, that no man has a title to the praise of God, unless his heart is circumcised by humility; unless he is little, and base, and vile in his own eyes; unless he is deeply convinced of that inbred "corruption of his nature," "whereby he is very far gone from original righteousness," being prone to all evil, averse to all good, corrupt and abominable; having a "carnal mind which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be;" unless he continually feels in his inmost soul, that without the Spirit of God resting upon him, he can neither think, nor desire, nor speak, nor act any thing good, or well-pleasing in his sight.

No man, I say, has a title to the praise of God, till he feels his want of God; nor indeed, till he seeketh that "honour which cometh of God" only; and neither desires nor pursues that which cometh of man, unless so far only as it tends to this.

2. Another truth, which naturally follows from what has been said, is, that none shall obtain the honour that cometh of God, unless his heart be circumcised by faith; even a "faith of the operation of God:" unless, refusing to be any longer led by his senses, appetites, or passions, or even by that blind leader of the blind, so idolized by the world, natural reason, he lives and walks by faith; directs every step, as "seeing Him that is invisible;" "looks not at the things that are seen, which are temporal, but at the things that are not seen, which are eternal;" and governs all his desires, designs, and thoughts, all his actions and conversations, as one who is entered in within the veil, where Jesus sits at the right hand of God.

3. It were to be wished, that they were better acquainted with this faith who employ much of their time and pains in laying another foundation; in grounding religion on the eternal *fitness* of things, on the intrinsic *excellence* of virtue, and the *beauty* of actions flowing from it; on the *reasons*, as they term them, of good and evil, and the *relations* of beings to each other. Either

these accounts of the grounds of Christian duty coincide with the scriptural or not. If they do, why are well-meaning men perplexed, and drawn from the weightier matters of the law, by a cloud of terms, whereby the easiest truths are explained into obscurity? If they are not, then it behoves them to consider who is the author of this new doctrine; whether he is likely to be an angel from heaven, who preacheth another gospel than that of Christ Jesus; though, if he were, God, not we, hath pronounced his sentence: "Let him be accursed."

4. Our gospel, as it knows no other foundation of good works than faith, or of faith than Christ, so it clearly informs us, we are not his disciples while we either deny him to be the Author, or his Spirit to be the Inspirer and Perfecter, both of our faith and works. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." He alone can quicken those who are dead unto God, can breathe into them the breath of Christian life, and so prevent, accompany, and follow them with his grace, as to bring their good desires to good effect. And, "As many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This is God's short and plain account of true religion and virtue; and "other foundation can no man lay."

5. From what has been said, we may, thirdly, learn, that none is truly "led by the Spirit," unless that "Spirit bear witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God;" unless he see the prize and the crown before him, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So greatly have they erred who have taught that, in serving God, we ought not to have a view to our own happiness! Nay, but we are often and expressly taught of God, to have "respect unto the recompence of reward;" to balance the toil with the "joy set before us," these "light afflictions" with that "exceeding weight of glory." Yea, we are "aliens to the covenant of promise," we are "without God in the world," until God "of his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto s

living hope of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

6. But if these things are so, it is high time for those persons to deal faithfully with their own souls, who are so far from finding in themselves this joyful assurance that they fulfil the terms, and shall obtain the promises, of that covenant, as to quarrel with the covenant itself, and blaspheme the terms of it; to complain, they are too severe, and that no man ever did or shall live up to them. What is this but to reproach God, as if he were a hard Master, requiring of his servants more than he enables them to perform?—as if he had mocked the helpless works of his hands, by binding them to impossibilities; by commanding them to overcome, where neither their own strength nor his grace was sufficient for them?

7. These blasphemers might almost persuade those to imagine themselves guiltless, who, in the contrary extreme, hope to fulfil the commands of God without taking any pains at all. Vain hope! that a child of Adam should ever expect to see the kingdom of Christ and of God without striving, without *agonizing*, first "to enter in at the strait gate;"—that one who was "conceived and born in sin," and whose "inward parts are very wickedness," should once entertain a thought of being "purified as his Lord is pure," unless he tread in his steps, and "take up his cross daily;" unless he "cut off his right hand," and "pluck out the right eye, and cast it from him;"—that he should ever dream of shaking off his old opinions, passions, tempers, of being "sanctified throughout in spirit, soul, and body," without a constant and continued course of general self-denial!

8. What less than this can we possibly infer from the above-cited words of St. Paul, who, living "in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses" for Christ's sake;—who, being full of "signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds,"—who, having been "caught up into the third heaven,"—yet reckoned, as

a late author strongly expresses it, that all his virtues would be insecure, and even his salvation in danger, without this constant self-denial? "So run I," says he, "not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:" by which he plainly teaches us, that he who does not thus run, who does not thus deny himself daily, does run uncertainly, and fighteth to as little purpose as he that "beateth the air."

9. To as little purpose does he talk of "fighting the fight of faith," as vainly hope to attain the crown of incorruption, (as we may, lastly, infer from the preceding observations,) whose heart is not circumcised by love. Love, cutting off both the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,—engaging the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, in the ardent pursuit of that one object,—is so essential to a child of God, that, without it, whosoever liveth is counted dead before him. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." "Nay, though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing."

10. Here, then, is the sum of the perfect law; this is the true circumcision of the heart. Let the spirit return to God that gave it, with the whole train of its affections. "Unto the place from whence all the rivers came," thither let them flow again. Other sacrifices from us he would not; but the living sacrifice of the heart he hath chosen. Let it be continually offered up to God through Christ, in flames of holy love. And let no creature be suffered to share with him: for he is a jealous God. His throne will he not divide with another; he will reign without a rival. Be no design, no desire admitted there, but what has Him for its ultimate object. This is the way wherein those children of God once walked, who, being dead, still speak to us: "De-

sire not to live but to praise his name: let all your thoughts, words, and works tend to his glory. Set your heart firm on him, and on other things only as they are in and from him. Let your soul be filled with so entire a love of him, that you may love nothing but for his sake." "Have a pure intention of heart, a steadfast regard to his glory in all your actions." "Fix your eye upon the blessed hope of your calling, and make all the things of the world minister unto it." For then, and not till then, is that "mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus," when, in every motion of our heart, in every word of our tongue, in every work of our hands, we "pursue nothing but in relation to him, and in subordination to his pleasure;" when we, too, neither think, nor speak, nor act, to fulfil our "own will, but the will of him that sent us;" when, whether we "eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we do all to the glory of God."

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### HYMN

God of all power, and truth, and grace,  
 Which shall from age to age endure;  
 Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass,  
 Remains and stands forever sure:

That I thy mercy may proclaim,  
 That all mankind thy truth may see,  
 Hallow thy great and glorious name,  
 And perfect holiness in me.

I.—X

15

Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,  
To quench my thirst and make me clean :  
Now, Father, let the gracious shower  
Descend, and make me pure from sin.

Purge me from every sinful blot ;  
My idols all be cast aside ;  
Cleans me from every sinful thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.

Give me a new, a perfect heart,  
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free ;  
The mind which was in Christ impart,  
And let my spirit cleave to thee.

Oh, take this heart of stone away !  
Thy sway it doth not, cannot own :  
In me no longer let it stay ;  
Oh, take away this heart of stone !

Oh that I now, from sin released,  
Thy word may to the utmost prove,  
Enter into the promised rest,  
The Canaan of thy perfect love !

18

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XVII.

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- Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What remark is here quoted?  
Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) To whom is this a hard saying?  
Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) Is the distinguishing mark inward or outward?  
Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is the first inquiry?  
Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What does the circumcision imply?  
Ques. 6. (I. 3.) Can we do this of ourselves?  
Ques. 7. (I. 4.) What is said of the honor that comes from men?  
Ques. 8. (I. 5.) What is said of those who follow Christ?  
Ques. 9. (I. 6.) What is the best guide?  
Ques. 10. (I. 7.) What is said of the believer?  
Ques. 11. (I. 8.) How is the power of faith shown?  
Ques. 12. (I. 9.) What is the next thing implied?  
Ques. 13. (I. 10.) What is said of the discipline of a true soldier of Christ?  
Ques. 14. (I. 11.) What is the one thing lacking?  
Ques. 15. (I. 12.) Does this forbid the love of any thing besides God?  
Ques. 16. (I. 13.) What is the ultimate end to be sought?  
Ques. 17. (II. 1.) What is first made clear?  
Ques. 18. (II. 2.) What other truth naturally follows?  
Ques. 19. (II. 3.) What is said of those who endeavor to lay another foundation?  
Ques. 20. (II. 4.) What is the foundation of good works?  
Ques. 21. (II. 5.) What may we learn thirdly?  
Ques. 22. (II. 6.) What is important if these things be so?  
Ques. 23. (II. 7.) What is said of the blasphemers?

**Ques. 24. (II. 8.)** What do we infer from the words of St. Paul?

**Ques. 25. (II. 9.)** What is said of him whose heart is not circumcised by love?

**Ques. 26. (II. 10.)** What is the sum of the perfect law?

**Ques. 27. (II. 10.)** How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XVIII.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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“THE present sermon is not in any proper sense of the term controversial,” says Burwash, “but is a simple exposition of the gospel salvation upon the basis of the word of God and in the light of Christian experience. The religion of Christ has already been presented to us under two aspects: 1. A new relation to God. 2. A new subjective experience of freedom from guilt and inward peace and assurance. It now comes before us under a third aspect—a *new set of affections, of motives of life*. The three aspects are distinct, but are inseparably one; the new relations give rise to new emotions; and out of these new emotions comes forth a new and abiding character. It is the soul’s entrance on the new life of this character which Mr. Wesley specifically regards as the new birth. In the latter part of the sermon Mr. Wesley allows that the term ‘new birth’ is used in all the standards of the Church of England in a different sense from this, to designate the new relationship in which a man is placed to God and his Church in the ordinance of baptism. Of this baptismal regeneration there are two definitions—one outward and formal, as the act by which a man enters the visible Church, or family of God; the other inward and operative, the communication to the soul of a germ, or seed, of divine grace. It is most likely that Mr. Wesley held this latter view, and regarded all men—or the great mass of them—as having ‘sinned away the grace of their baptism.’ But whatever may have been his interpretations of the Church formularies, he puts them here com-

pletely aside, and preaches only the Arminian Methodist doctrine of the new birth as an inward change of nature, inseparably associated with a change of relation to God, and a profound crisis of religious experience.

"In the theology of the Reformation the term 'regeneration' was made to include the entire secret operation of the Spirit by which man was brought from a state of nature to a state of grace, and finally of full salvation, whether this operation was conditional on baptism, as with the Lutherans, or on the secret decree of God, as with Calvin. The specific definition of regeneration, which we believe to be scriptural, and which is now almost universally accepted by Protestants (see Hodge's 'Systematic Theology,' vol. iii., p. 5), *the modern Christian Church owes to Methodism.*

"To this view of regeneration, with the corresponding views of justification, justifying faith, and assurance, is largely due the power of revival preaching both in the last century and the present. This entire system of the doctrine of salvation sets before men something so definite as the test of their moral and religious condition that every man's conscience must respond with a definite 'Yes' or 'No' to the question, 'Am I saved?' It is throughout the doctrine of a *present* and a *conscious* salvation. Any doctrine of an election from all eternity, or of a personal redemption completed unconditionally in Christ, or of sacramental salvation, the germ of which is implanted in baptism, and which is gradually and unconsciously carried forward to perfection by the means of grace, can never be made the basis of such appeal to the unconverted as is founded upon the doctrine before us."

Some of the greatest controversies that have agitated the Christian world have arisen from the diversity of opinions concerning baptism. As early as the middle of the second century we find in the works of Justin Martyr, and in Tertullian and Irenæus a little later, the use of the figurative language of the New Testament in a literal sense. The

*laver of regeneration* became the ordinary term for the baptismal font, and at this point began the series of departures from New Testament doctrine which ultimately led to the Roman Catholic theology. Augustine and Pelagius early in the fifth century began their great controversy with the question whether an unbaptized child, dying in infancy, could be saved. Augustine argued that all unbaptized children perished, and Pelagius took the opposite ground. On this basis, then, that baptism was the *instrument* of regeneration, it became the current doctrine that there was no salvation without it.

Infant baptism was the only form of the ordinance known to the Church of England until the year 1661. The English Prayer-book of 1549 contains two forms—one for the public and the other for the private baptism of infants. After the Restoration, Bishop Sanderson states, in the Preface to the Prayer-book of 1661, that it was thought expedient to add “an office for the baptism of such as are of riper years, which, although not so necessary when the former book was compiled, yet, by the growth of Anabaptism, through the licentiousness of the late times crept in among us, now became necessary, and may be always useful for the baptizing of natives of our plantations and others converted to the faith.”

The prevalence of infant baptism is as clearly demonstrated in the history of the Church as the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. The Reformation in the sixteenth century began the work of return to an evangelical theology, and the Puritans contributed somewhat to the same result; but it was left to the Methodists of the eighteenth century to restore the doctrine of the new birth to the Church, and to place the practice of infant baptism on its true basis.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XVIII.

The sermon not intended to define, but to point out, the marks of the new birth.

I. Faith. Gal. iii. 26; John i. 12, 13; 1 John v. 1. Not bare assent, or intellectual faith; but beyond this "a disposition wrought by God in the heart." This implies a preceding sense of sin. It is invariably followed by power over sin. (See Rom. vi.; also 1 John iii. 1, etc.) It is also followed by peace. Rom. v. 1; John xiv. 27; xvi. 33.

II. Hope. 1 Pet. i. 3. Called also *full assurance*. Including the witness of our own spirit and the witness of God's Spirit. Rom. viii. 15-17. This hope is the source of the Christian's joy. Rom. v. 2; 1 Pet. i. 5.

III. Love. Rom. v. 5. From love to God springs love to our neighbor. Manifest in outward works, but not a mere outward service.

IV. Application. Such being the marks, are you *thus* born of God? Not what you were made in baptism, but what are you now? Baptism avails nothing if ye are now the children of the devil.

## SERMON XVIII.

### THE MARKS OF THE NEW BIRTH.

“*No is every one that is born of the Spirit.*”—JOHN iii. 8

1. How is every one that is “born of the Spirit,”—that is, born again,—born of God? What is meant by the being born again, the being born of God, or being born of the Spirit? What is implied in the being a son or a child of God, or having the Spirit of adoption? That these privileges, by the free mercy of God, are ordinarily annexed to baptism (which is thence termed by our Lord, in the preceding verse, the being “born of water and of the Spirit”) we know; but we would know what these privileges are: what is the new birth?

2. Perhaps it is not needful to give a definition of this, seeing the Scripture gives none. But as the question is of the deepest concern to every child of man; since, “except a man be born again,” born of the Spirit, “he cannot see the kingdom of God;” I propose to lay down the marks of it in the plainest manner, just as I find them laid down in Scripture.

I. 1. The first of these, and the foundation of all the rest, is faith. So St. Paul, “Ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. iii. 26.) So St. John, “To them gave he power” (*εξουσιαν*, *right* or *privilege*, it might rather be translated) “to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born,” when they believed, “not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh,” not by natural generation, “nor of the will of man,” like those children adopted by men, in whom no inward change is thereby wrought, “but of God.” (John i. 12, 13.) And again, in his General Epistle, “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God.” (1 John v. 1.)

2. But it is not a barely notional or speculative faith that is here spoken of by the apostles. It is not a bare assent to this proposition, "Jesus is the Christ;" nor indeed to all the propositions contained in our creed, or in the Old and New Testament. It is not merely an assent to any or all these credible things, as credible. To say this, were to say (which who could hear?) that the devils were born of God; for they have this faith. They, trembling, believe, both that Jesus is the Christ, and that all Scripture, having been given by inspiration of God, is true as God is true. It is not only an assent to divine truth, upon the testimony of God, or upon the evidence of miracles; for *they* also heard the words of his mouth, and knew him to be a faithful and true witness. They could not but receive the testimony he gave, both of himself, and of the Father which sent him. They saw likewise the mighty works which he did, and thence believed that he "came forth from God." Yet, notwithstanding this faith, they are still "reserved in chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

3. For all this is no more than a dead faith. The true, living, Christian faith, which whosoever hath is born of God, is not only assent, an act of the understanding; but a disposition, which God hath wrought in his heart; "a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God." This implies, that, a man first renounce himself; that, in order to be "found in Christ," to be accepted through him, he totally rejects all "confidence in the flesh;" that, "having nothing to pay," having no trust in his own works or righteousness of any kind, he comes to God as a lost, miserable, self-destroyed, self-condemned, undone, helpless sinner; as one whose mouth is utterly stopped, and who is altogether "guilty before God." Such a sense of sin, (commonly called "despair," by those who speak evil of the things they know not,) together with a full conviction, such as no words can express, that of

Christ only cometh our salvation, and an earnest desire of that salvation, must precede a living faith, a trust in Him, who "for us paid our ransom by his death, and fulfilled the law in his life." This faith then, whereby we are born of God, is "not only a belief of all the articles of our faith, but also a true confidence of the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

4. An immediate and constant fruit of this faith whereby we are born of God, a fruit which can in no wise be separated from it, no not for an hour, is power over sin;—power over outward sin of every kind; over every evil word and work; for wheresoever the blood of Christ is thus applied, it "purgeth the conscience from dead works;"—and over inward sin; for it purifieth the heart from every unholy desire and temper. This fruit of faith St. Paul has largely described, in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. "How shall we," saith he, "who" by faith "are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" "Our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."—"Likewise, reckon ye yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign" even "in your mortal body;" "but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead." "For sin shall not have dominion over you.—God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin,—but being made free,"—the plain meaning is, God be thanked, that though ye were, in time past, the servants of sin, yet now, "being free from sin, ye are become the servants of righteousness."

5. The same invaluable privilege of the sons of God is as strongly asserted by St. John; particularly with regard to the former branch of it, namely, power over outward sin. After he had been crying out, as one astonished at the depth of the riches of the goodness of God,—“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it

doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is;" (1 John iii. 1, &c.);—he soon adds, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin because he is born of God." (Verse 9.) But some men will say, "True: whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin *habitually*." *Habitually!* Whence is that? I read it not. It is not written in the Book. God plainly saith, "He doth not commit sin;" and thou addest *habitually!* Who art thou that *mendest* the oracles of God?—that "addest to the words of this book?" Beware, I beseech thee, lest God "add to thee all the plagues that are written therein!" especially when the comment thou addest is such as quite swallows up the text: so that by this *μεθοδεια πλανης*, this artful method of deceiving, the precious promise is utterly lost; by this *κυβεια ανθρωπων*, this tricking and shuffling of men, the word of God is made of none effect. Oh, beware, thou that thus takest from the words of this book, that, taking away the whole meaning and spirit from them, leavest only what may indeed be termed a dead letter, lest God take away thy part out of the book of life!

6. Suffer we the apostle to interpret his own words, by the whole tenor of his discourse. In the fifth verse of this chapter, he had said, "Ye know that he," Christ, "was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." What is the inference he draws from this? "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him." (1 John iii. 6.) To his enforcement of this important doctrine, he premises a highly necessary caution: "Little children, let no man deceive you:" (verse 7:) for many will endeavour so to do; to persuade you that you may be unrighteous, that you may commit sin, and yet be children of God: "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the

beginning." Then follows, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." In this, adds the apostle, "the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." By this plain mark (the committing or not committing sin) are they distinguished from each other. To the same effect are those words in his fifth chapter: "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (Verse 18.)

7. Another fruit of this living faith is peace. For, "being justified by faith," having all our sins blotted out, "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. v. 1.) This indeed our Lord himself, the night before his death, solemnly bequeathed to all his followers: "Peace," saith he, "I leave with you;" (you who "believe in God," and "believe also in me;") "my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John xiv. 27.) And again: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." (John xvi. 33.) This is that "peace of God which passeth all understanding," that serenity of soul which it hath not entered into the heart of a natural man to conceive, and which it is not possible for even the spiritual man to utter. And it is a peace which all the powers of earth and hell are unable to take from him. Waves and storms beat upon it, but they shake it not; for it is founded upon a rock. It keepeth the hearts and minds of the children of God, at all times and in all places. Whether they are in ease or in pain, in sickness or health, in abundance or want, they are happy in God. In every state they have learned to be content, yea, to give thanks unto God through Christ Jesus; being well assured, that "whatsoever is, is best," because it is His will concerning them; so that in all the vicissitudes of life, their "heart standeth fast, believing in the Lord."

II. 1. A second scriptural mark of those who are born of God, is hope. Thus St. Peter, speaking to all the children of God who were then scattered abroad, saith, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." (1 Peter i. 3.) *Ἐλπίδα ζῶσαν*, a *lively* or *living* hope, saith the apostle; because there is also a *dead* hope, as well as a *dead* faith; a hope which is not from God, but from the enemy of God and man;—as evidently appears by its fruits; for, as it is the offspring of pride, so it is the parent of every evil word and work; whereas, every man that hath in him this living hope, is "holy as He that calleth him is holy:" every man that can truly say to his brethren in Christ, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and we shall see him as he is," "purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

2. This hope implies, first, the testimony of our own spirit, or conscience, that we walk "in simplicity and godly sincerity;" secondly, the testimony of the Spirit of God, "bearing witness with," or to, "our spirit, that we are the children of God," "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

3. Let us well observe what is here taught us by God himself, touching this glorious privilege of his children. Who is it that is here said to bear witness? Not our spirit only, but another; even the Spirit of God: He it is who "beareth witness with our spirit." What is it he beareth witness of? "That we are the children of God;" "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ;" (Rom. viii. 16, 17;) "if so be that we suffer with him," if we deny ourselves, if we take up our cross daily, if we cheerfully endure persecution or reproach for his sake, "that we may also be glorified together." And in whom doth the Spirit of God bear this witness? In all who are the children of God. By this very argument does the apostle prove, in the preceding verses, that they are so. "As many," saith he, "as are led by the Spirit of God,

they are the sons of God." "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" It follows, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. viii 14-16.)

4. The variation of the phrase in the fifteenth verse is worthy our observation: "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father!" Ye, as many as are the sons of God, have, in virtue of your sonship, received that selfsame Spirit of adoption, whereby *we* cry, Abba, Father. *We*, the apostles, prophets, teachers, (for so the word may not improperly be understood,) *we*, through whom you have believed, "ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." As *we* and *you* have one Lord, so we have one Spirit: as we have one faith, so we have one hope also. We and you are sealed with one "Spirit of promise," the earnest of *your* and of *our* inheritance; the same Spirit bearing witness with your and with our spirit, "that we are the children of God."

5. And thus is the scripture fulfilled, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." For it is easy to believe, that though sorrow may precede this witness of God's Spirit with our spirit; (indeed *must*, in some degree, while we groan under fear, and a sense of the wrath of God abiding on us;) yet, as soon as any man feeleth it in himself, his "sorrow is turned into joy." Whatsoever his pain may have been before; ye, as soon as that "hour is come, he remembereth the anguish no more for joy" that he is born of God. It may be, many of *you* have now sorrow, because you are "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel;" because you are conscious to yourselves that you have not this spirit; that you are "without hope and without God in the world." But when the Comforter is come, "then your heart shall rejoice;" yea, "your joy shall be full," and "that joy no man taketh from you." (John xvi. 22.) "We joy in God," will ye say, "through

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement;" "by whom we have access into this grace," this state of grace, of favour, or reconciliation with God, "wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. v. 2.) "Ye," saith St. Peter, whom God hath "begotten again unto a lively hope, are kept by the power of God unto salvation; wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; in whom, though now ye see him not, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (1 Peter i. 5, &c.) Unspeakable indeed! It is not for the tongue of man to describe this joy in the Holy Ghost. It is "the hidden manna, which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it." But this we know, it not only remains, but overflows, in the depth of affliction. "Are the consolations of God" small with his children, when all earthly comforts fail? Not so. But when sufferings most abound, the consolations of his Spirit do much more abound; insomuch that the sons of God "laugh at destruction when it cometh;" at want, pain, hell, and the grave; as knowing Him who "hath the keys of death and hell," and will shortly "cast them into the bottomless pit;" as hearing even now the great voice out of heaven saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." (Rev. xxi. 3, 4.)

III 1. A third scriptural mark of those who are born of God, and the greatest of all, is love; even "the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them." (Rom. v. 5.) "Because they are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" (Gal iv

6.) By this Spirit, continually looking up to God as their reconciled and loving Father, they cry to Him for their daily bread, for all things needful, whether for their souls or bodies. They continually pour out their hearts before him, knowing "they have the petitions which they ask of him." (1 John v. 15.) Their delight is in him. He is the joy of their heart; their "shield," and their "exceeding great reward." The desire of their soul is toward him; it is their "meat and drink to do his will;" and they are "satisfied as with marrow and fatness, while their mouth praiseth him with joyful lips." (Ps. lxxiii. 5.)

2. And in this sense, also, "every one who loveth him that begat, loveth him that is begotten of him." (1 John v. 1.) His spirit rejoiceth in God his Saviour. He "loveth the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." He is so "joined unto the Lord," as to be one spirit. His soul hangeth upon Him, and chooseth Him as altogether lovely, "the chiefest among ten thousand." He knoweth, he feeleth what that means, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." (Cant. ii. 16.) "Thou art fairer than the children of men; full of grace are thy lips, because God hath anointed thee for ever!" (Ps. xlv. 2.)

3. The necessary fruit of this love of God is the love of our neighbour; of every soul which God hath made; not excepting our enemies; not excepting those who are now "despitefully using and persecuting us;"—a love, whereby we love every man as ourselves; as we love our own souls. Nay, our Lord has expressed it still more strongly, teaching us to "love one another, even as He hath loved us." Accordingly, the commandment written in the hearts of all those that love God is no other than this, "As I have loved you, so love ye one another." Now, "herein perceive we the love of God, in that he laid down his life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) "We ought," then, as the apostle justly infers, "to lay down our lives for the brethren." If we feel ourselves ready to do this, then do we truly love our neighbour. Then "we know that we have passed

from death unto life, because we" thus "love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.) "Hereby know we" that we are born of God, that we "dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his" loving "Spirit" (iv. 13) For "love is of God; and every one that" thus "loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (iv. 7.)

4. But some may possibly ask, "Does not the apostle say, 'This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments?'" (1 John v. 3.) Yea, and this is the love of our neighbour also, in the same sense as it is the love of God. But what would you infer from hence? that the keeping the outward commandments is all that is implied in loving God with all your heart, with all your mind, and soul and strength, and in loving your neighbour as yourself? that the love of God is not an affection of the soul, but merely an *outward service*? and that the love of our neighbour is not a disposition of heart, but barely a course of *outward works*? To mention so wild an interpretation of the apostle's words, is sufficiently to confute it. The plain indisputable meaning of the text is,—This is the sign or proof of the love of God, of our keeping the first and great commandment, to keep all the rest of his commandments. For true love, if it be once shed abroad in our heart, will constrain us so to do; since, whosoever loves God with all his heart, cannot but serve him with all his strength.

5. A second fruit then of the love of God (so far as it can be distinguished from it) is universal obedience to him we love, and conformity to his will; obedience to all the commands of God, internal and external; obedience of the heart and of the life: in every temper, and in all manner of conversation. And one of the tempers most obviously implied herein is, the being "zealous of good works;" the hungering and thirsting to do good, in every possible kind, unto all men; the rejoicing to "spend and be spent for them," for every child of man; not looking for any recompense in this world, but only in the resurrection of the just.

IV. 1. Thus have I plainly laid down those marks of the new birth which I find laid down in Scripture. Thus doth God himself answer that weighty question: What is it to be born of God? Such, if the appeal be made to the oracles of God, is "every one that is born of the Spirit." This it is, in the judgment of the Spirit of God, to be a son or a child of God: it is so to *believe* in God, through Christ, as "not to commit sin," and to enjoy at all times, and in all places, that "peace of God which passeth all understanding." It is, so to *hope* in God through the Son of his love, as to have not only the "testimony of a good conscience," but also the Spirit of God "bearing witness with your spirits, that ye are the children of God;" whence cannot but spring the rejoicing in Him through whom ye "have received the atonement." It is so to *love* God, who hath thus loved you, as you never did love any creature; so that ye are constrained to love all men as yourselves; with a love not only ever burning in your hearts, but flaming out in all your actions and conversations, and making your whole life one "labour of love," one continued obedience to those commands, "Be ye merciful, as God is merciful:" "Be ye holy, as I the Lord am holy:" "Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

2. Who then are ye that are *thus* born of God? Ye "know the things which are given to you of God." Ye well know that ye are the children of God, and "can assure your hearts before him." And every one of you who has observed these words cannot but feel, and know of a truth, whether at this hour, (answer to God, and not to man!) you are thus a child of God or no. The question is not, what you was made in baptism; (do not evade;) but, What are you now? Is the Spirit of adoption now in your heart? To your own heart let the appeal be made. I ask not, whether you *was* born of water and of the Spirit; but are you *now* the temple of the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in you? I allow you *was* "circumcised with the circumcision of Christ;" (as St. Paul emphatically terms baptism;) but does the

Spirit of Christ and of *glory* now rest upon you? Else, "your circumcision is become uncircumcision."

3. Say not then in your heart, "I *was once* baptized, therefore I *am now* a child of God." Alas, that consequence will by no means hold. How many are the baptized gluttons and drunkards, the baptized liars and common swearers, the baptized railers and evil speakers, the baptized whoremongers, thieves, extortioners? What think you? Are these now the children of God? Verily, I say unto you, whosoever you are, unto whom any one of the preceding characters belongs, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the works of your father ye do." Unto you I call, in the name of Him whom you crucify afresh, and in his words to your circumcised predecessors, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

4. How, indeed, except ye be born again? For ye are now dead in trespasses and sins. To say, then, that ye cannot be born again, that there is no new birth but in baptism, is to seal you all under damnation, is to consign you to hell, without help, without hope. And perhaps some may think this just and right. In their zeal for the Lord of hosts, they may say, "Yea, cut off the sinners, the Amalekites! Let these Gibeonites be utterly destroyed! They deserve no less." No; nor I, nor you. Mine and your desert, as well as theirs, is hell; and it is mere mercy, free, undeserved mercy, that we are not now in unquenchable fire. You will say, "But we are washed;" we were born again "of water and of the Spirit." So *were* they: this, therefore, hinders not at all, but that ye may *now* be even as they. Know ye not, that "what is highly esteemed of men is an abomination in the sight of God?" Come forth, ye "saints of the world," ye that are honoured of men, and ye who will cast the first stone at them, at these wretches not fit to live upon the earth, these common harlots, adulterers, murderers. Only learn ye first what that meaneth, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer." (1 John iii. 15.) "He that looketh on a woman

to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. v. 28.) "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?" (James iv. 4.)

5. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye" also "must be born again." "Except ye" also "be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God." Lean no more on the staff of that broken reed, that ye *were* born again in baptism. Who denies that ye were then made children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven? But, notwithstanding this, ye are now children of the devil. Therefore ye must be born again. And let not Satan put it into your heart to cavil at a word, when the thing is clear. Ye have heard what are the marks of the children of God: all ye who have them not on your souls, baptized or unbaptized, must needs receive them, or without doubt ye will perish everlastingly. And if ye have been baptized, your only hope is this,—that those who were made the children of God by baptism, but are now the children of the devil, may yet again receive "power to become the sons of God;" that they may receive again what they have lost, even the "Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father!"

Amen, Lord Jesus! May every one who prepareth his heart yet again to seek thy face, receive again that Spirit of adoption, and cry out, "Abba, Father!" Let him now again have power so to believe in thy name as to become a child of God; as to know and feel he hath "redemption in thy blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" and that he "cannot commit sin, because he is born of God." Let him be now "begotten again unto a living hope," so as to "purify himself as thou art pure;" and "because he is a son," let the Spirit of love and of glory rest upon him, cleansing him "from all filthiness of flesh and spirit," and teaching him to "perfect holiness in the fear of God!"

## HYMN.

**SINCE** the Son hath made me **free**,  
 Let me taste my liberty ;  
 Thee behold with open face,  
 Triumph in thy saving grace ;  
 Thy great will delight to prove,  
 Glory in thy perfect love.

Abba, Father ! hear thy child,  
 Late in Jesus reconciled ;  
 Hear, and all the graces shower,  
 All the joy, and peace, and power,  
 All my Saviour asks above,  
 All the life and heaven of love

Lord, I will not let thee go,  
 Till the blessing thou bestow :  
 Hear my Advocate Divine !  
 Lo ! to his my suit I join ;  
 Join'd to his, it cannot fail ;  
 Bless me ; for I will prevail !

Holy Ghost, no more delay !  
 Come, and in thy temple stay !  
 Now thine inward witness bear,  
 Strong, and permanent, and clear  
 Spring of Life, thyself impart :  
 Rise eternal in my heart !

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XVIII.

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What does he say were privileges annexed ordinarily to baptism? In this statement is he not reflecting the views of the Church of England?

Ques. 2. (§ 1.) If they were only ordinarily *annexed* to baptism, does it follow that every one who was baptized was "born again" in a spiritual sense?

Ques. 3. (§ 2.) Does he say that the Scripture gives no definition to the new birth?

Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What is the first mark laid down?

Ques. 5. (I. 2.) Is this barely a notional or speculative faith?

Ques. 6. (I. 3.) What is true, living, Christian faith?

Ques. 7. (I. 4.) What is its immediate fruit?

Ques. 8. (I. 5.) What is asserted by St. John? What is said of habitual sin?

Ques. 9. (I. 6.) What is the interpretation of the apostle's words?

Ques. 10. (I. 7.) What is another fruit of faith?

Ques. 11. (II. 1.) What is the second scriptural mark?

Ques. 12. (II. 2.) What does the full assurance of hope imply?

Ques. 13. (II. 3.) What is here taught by God himself?

Ques. 14. (II. 4.) What is worthy of observation here?

Ques. 15. (II. 5.) How is the scripture fulfilled? What scripture is it?

Ques. 16. (III. 1.) What is the third scriptural mark?

Ques. 17. (III. 2.) What is said of loving our brethren?

Ques. 18. (III. 3.) What is the necessary fruit of love to God?

Ques. 19. (III. 4.) What may be asked by an objector?

Ques. 20. (III. 5.) What is the second fruit?

Ques. 21. (IV. 1.) What have been plainly laid down?

Ques. 22. (IV. 2.) Who are they thus born of God?

Ques. 23. (IV. 3.) Does it follow that those who were once baptized are now children of God? How does he prove that they are not?

Ques. 24. (IV. 4.) What follows the assertion that there is no new birth but baptism?

Ques. 25. (IV. 5.) What exhortation does he give here?

Ques. 26. (IV. 5.) How does he contrast the supposed benefit of baptism with their present condition?

Ques. 27. What appears to be the logical conclusion from the entire discourse? *Ans.* The Church of England taught that baptism was a change of state from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of Christ. Baptism was the sign of spiritual cleansing, the seal of the promise given to impart the blessing, and the pledge of its bestowal upon the person baptized. But the ordinance availed nothing if the adult remained a sinner and still needed a new birth.

SERMON XIX.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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“THIS sermon,” says Prof. Burwash, “sets before us very clearly Mr. Wesley’s view of the relation of Christian experience or consciousness to the new *moral life*. He lays this down as a fundamental principle that the conscious sense of God’s presence cannot co-exist with conscious consent to sin. And as Mr. Wesley knows of no occult religion, or imputed favor of God, which is not revealed, a holy will becomes thus an inseparable result of true religion, and an indispensable condition of its continuance.

“This requirement of rectitude of will stands out in the very forefront of Methodist theology. It is linked with the Arminian doctrines of responsibility and freedom on the one hand, and on the other it forms the first step in the Wesleyan doctrine of scriptural holiness, the crown of which is Christian perfection. A theology which embraces such fundamental elements as these can have no fellowship with Antinomianism. If a consciously-holy purpose of will enters into all true Christian life, then there must be a law of God by which this holy will is directed. Thus all moral law enters not as ornamental addition, but as an essential element into the true Christian experience. Hence in Mr. Wesley’s plan we shall find next in order an exposition of Christian moral law, the sermon of our Lord on the mount being the basis.

“Methodism is thus peculiarly *ethical Christianity*. Mr. Wesley seems to combine in his own religious life and teachings all the ethical elements with which he came in contact.

Holiness is the central conception of God and of religion, and the only perfection of man.

“In this view of religion *the will* becomes a most important factor. It is the will which establishes a fundamental difference between all involuntary moral imperfection and sinfulness and the sin, pre-eminently so called, which brings guilt and separation from God.”

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XIX.

Justification and regeneration, one in point of time, are distinct in nature—one a relative change, the other real; one wrought for us, the other in us; one removing the guilt, the other the power of sin.

I. The meaning of the expression, “Whosoever is born of God.”

Not baptism or any outward change, but inward, beginning a different life. Analogy of the natural birth. The new perception of the spiritual life.

II. In what sense he doth not commit sin.

Sin defined as actual, voluntary transgression of the law. This the man who abides in faith, love, and prayer cannot do. But some such have sinned: David, Barnabas, Peter. *Ans.* There is a condition, “He keepeth himself.” Sin is first negative; failure to watch; then positive inward sin; then positive outward transgression. The last is always *preceded* by loss of faith. Eight steps of the fall described.

III. We learn four lessons.

## SERMON XIX.

THE GREAT PRIVILEGE OF THOSE THAT  
ARE BORN OF GOD

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*“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.”*—1 JOHN iii. 9.

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1. IT has been frequently supposed, that the being born of God was all one with the being justified; that the new birth and justification were only different expressions, denoting the same thing: it being certain, on the one hand, that whoever is justified is also born of God; and on the other, that whoever is born of God is also justified; yea, that both these gifts of God are given to every believer in one and the same moment. In one point of time his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God.

2. But though it be allowed, that justification and the new birth are, in point of time, inseparable from each other, yet are they easily distinguished, as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature. Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change. God in justifying us does something *for* us; in begetting us again, he does the work *in* us. The former changes our outward relation to God, so that of enemies we become children; by the latter, our inmost souls are changed, so that of sinners we become saints. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image, of God. The one is the taking away the guilt, the other the taking away the power, of sin: so that, although they are joined together in point of time, yet are they of wholly distinct natures.

3. The not discerning this, the not observing the wide difference there is between being justified and being

born again, has occasioned exceeding great confusion of thought in many who have treated on this subject; particularly when they have attempted to explain this great privilege of the children of God; to show how "whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin."

4. In order to apprehend this clearly, it may be necessary, first, to consider what is the proper meaning of that expression, "Whosoever is born of God;" and, secondly, to inquire, in what sense he "doth not commit sin."

I. 1. First, we are to consider, what is the proper meaning of that expression, "Whosoever is born of God." And, in general, from all the passages of holy writ wherein this expression, "the being born of God," occurs, we may learn that it implies not barely the being baptized, or any outward change whatever; but a vast inward change, a change wrought in the soul, by the operation of the Holy Ghost; a change in the whole manner of our existence; for, from the moment we are born of God, we live in quite another manner than we did before; we are, as it were, in another world.

2. The ground and reason of the expression is easy to be understood. When we undergo this great change, we may, with much propriety, be said to be born again, because there is so near a resemblance between the circumstances of the natural and of the spiritual birth; so that to consider the circumstances of the natural birth is the most easy way to understand the spiritual.

3. The child which is not yet born subsists indeed by the air, as does every thing which has life; but *feels* it not, nor any thing else, unless in a very dull and imperfect manner. It *hears* little, if at all; the organs of hearing being as yet closed up. It *sees* nothing; having its eyes fast shut, and being surrounded with utter darkness. There are, it may be, some faint beginnings of life, when the time of its birth draws nigh, and some motion consequent thereon, whereby it is distinguished from a mere mass of matter: but it has no *senses*; all

these avenues of the soul are hitherto quite shut up. Of consequence, it has scarce any intercourse with this visible world; nor any knowledge, conception, or idea of the things that occur therein.

4. The reason why he that is not yet born is wholly a stranger to the visible world, is not because it is afar off; (it is very nigh; it surrounds him on every side;) but, partly, because he has not those senses, they are not yet opened in his soul, whereby alone it is possible to hold commerce with the material world; and partly, because so thick a veil is cast between, through which he can discern nothing.

5. But no sooner is the child born into the world, than he exists in a quite different manner. He now *feels* the air with which he is surrounded, and which pours into him from every side, as fast as he alternately breathes it back, to sustain the flame of life: and hence springs a continual increase of strength, of motion, and of sensation; all the bodily senses being now awakened, and furnished with their proper objects.

His eyes are now opened to perceive the light, which, silently flowing in upon them, discovers not only itself, but an infinite variety of things, with which before he was wholly unacquainted. His ears are unclosed, and sounds rush in with endless diversity. Every sense is employed upon such objects as are peculiarly suitable to it; and by these inlets the soul, having an open intercourse with the visible world, acquires more and more knowledge of sensible things, of all the things which are under the sun.

6. So it is with him that is born of God. Before that great change is wrought, although he subsists by Him, in whom all that have life "live, and move, and have their being," yet he is not *sensible* of God; he does not *feel*, he has no inward consciousness of His presence. He does not perceive that divine breath of life, without which he cannot subsist a moment: nor is he sensible of any of the things of God; they make ac

impression upon his soul. God is continually calling to him from on high, but he heareth not; his ears are shut, so that the "voice of the charmer" is lost to him, "charm he never so wisely." He seeth not the things of the Spirit of God; the eyes of his understanding being closed, and utter darkness covering his whole soul, surrounding him on every side. It is true he may have some faint dawnings of life, some small beginnings of spiritual motion; but as yet he has no spiritual senses capable of discerning spiritual objects; consequently, he "discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God; he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

7. Hence he has scarce any knowledge of the invisible world, as he has scarce any intercourse with it. Not that it is afar off: no: he is in the midst of it; it encompasses him round about. The *other world*, as we usually term it, is not far from every one of us; it is above, and beneath, and on every side. Only the natural man discerneth it not; partly, because he has no spiritual senses, whereby alone we can discern the things of God; partly, because so thick a veil is interposed as he knows not how to penetrate.

8. But when he is born of God, born of the Spirit, how is the manner of his existence changed! His whole soul is now sensible of God, and he can say, by sure experience, "Thou art about my bed and about my path;" I feel thee in all my ways: "Thou besettest me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me." The spirit or breath of God is immediately inspired, breathed into the new-born soul; and the same breath which comes from, returns to God: as it is continually received by faith, so it is continually rendered back by love, by prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving; love and praise, and prayer being the breath of every soul which is truly born of God. And by this new kind of spiritual respiration, spiritual life is not only sustained, but increased day by day, together with spiritual strength, and motion, and sensation; all the senses of

the soul being now awake, and capable of discerning spiritual good and evil.

9. "The eyes of his understanding" are now "open," and he "seeth him that is invisible." He sees what is "the exceeding greatness of his power" and of his love towards them that believe. He sees that God is merciful to him a sinner; that he is reconciled through the Son of his love. He clearly perceives both the pardoning love of God, and all his "exceeding great and precious promises." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined," and doth shine, "in his heart," to enlighten him with "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." All the darkness is now passed away, and he abides in the light of God's countenance.

10. His ears are now opened, and the voice of God no longer calls in vain. He hears and obeys the heavenly calling; he knows the voice of his Shepherd. All his spiritual senses being now awakened, he has a clear intercourse with the invisible world; and hence he knows more and more of the things which before it could not "enter into his heart to conceive." He now knows what the peace of God is; what is joy in the Holy Ghost; what the love of God which is shed abroad in the hearts of them that believe in him through Christ Jesus. Thus the veil being removed which before intercepted the light and voice, the knowledge and love of God, he who is born of the Spirit, dwelling in love, "dwelleth in God, and God in him."

II. 1. Having considered the meaning of that expression, "Whosoever is born of God," it remains, in the second place, to inquire, in what sense he "doth not commit sin."

Now one who is so born of God, as hath been above described, who continually receives into his soul the breath of life from God, the gracious influence of his Spirit, and continually renders it back; one who thus believes and loves, who by faith perceives the continu-  
 actings of God upon his spirit, and by a kind of spirit

ual reaction returns the grace he receives, in unceasing love, and praise, and prayer; not only doth not commit sin, while he thus keepeth himself, but so long as this "seed remaineth in him, he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

2. By sin, I here understand outward sin, according to the plain, common acceptation of the word; an actual, voluntary transgression of the law; of the revealed, written law of God; of any commandment of God, acknowledged to be such at the time that it is transgressed. But "whosoever is born of God," while he abideth in faith and love, and in the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving, not only doth not, but cannot thus commit sin. So long as he thus believeth in God through Christ, and loves him, and is pouring out his heart before him, he cannot voluntarily transgress any command of God, either by speaking or acting what he knows God hath forbidden: so long that seed which remaineth in him, that loving, praying, thankful faith, compels him to refrain from whatsoever he knoweth to be an abomination in the sight of God.

3. But here a difficulty will immediately occur; and one that to many has appeared insuperable, and induced them to deny the plain assertion of the apostle, and give up the privilege of the children of God.

It is plain in fact, that those whom we cannot deny to have been truly born of God, (the Spirit of God having given us in his word this infallible testimony concerning them,) nevertheless, not only could, but did commit sin, even gross, outward sin. They did transgress the plain, known laws of God, speaking or acting what they knew he had forbidden.

4. Thus David was unquestionably born of God or ever he was anointed King over Israel. He knew in whom he had believed; "he was strong in faith, giving glory to God." "The Lord," saith he, "is my Shepherd; therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in green pastures, and lead me forth beside the waters of somfort. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the

shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." (Psalm xxiii. 1, &c.) He was filled with love; such as often constrained him to cry out, "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength: the Lord is my stony rock, and my defence; the horn also of my salvation, and my refuge." (Psalm xviii. 1, 2.) He was a man of prayer; pouring out his soul before God in all circumstances of life; and abundant in praises and thanksgivings. "Thy praise," saith he, "shall be ever in my mouth:" (Psalm xxxiv. 1:) "Thou art my God, and I will thank thee; thou art my God, and I will praise thee." (Psalm cxviii. 28.) And yet such a child of God could and did commit sin; yea, the horrid sins of adultery and murder.

5. And even after the Holy Ghost was more largely given, after "life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel," we want not instances of the same melancholy kind; which were also doubtless written for our instruction. Thus he who (probably from his selling all that he had, and bringing the price for the relief of his poor brethren) was by the apostles themselves surnamed Barnabas, that is, the son of consolation; (Acts iv. 36, 37;) who was so honoured at Antioch, as to be selected with Saul out of all the disciples, to carry their relief unto the brethren in Judea; (Acts xi. 29, 30;) this Barnabas, who, at his return from Judea, was, by the peculiar direction of the Holy Ghost, solemnly "separated from the other prophets and teachers, for the work whereunto God had called him," (xiii. 1-4,) even to accompany the great apostle among the Gentiles, and to be his fellow-labourer in every place;—nevertheless, was afterwards so sharp, (xv. 35, 39,) in his contention with St. Paul, (because he "thought it not good to take with them John," in his visiting the brethren a second time, "who had departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work,") that he himself also departed from the work; that he "took John, and sailed unto Cyprus;" (xv. 39;) forsaking him to whom he had been in so immediate a manner joined by the Holy Ghost.

6. An instance more astonishing than both these is given by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians. When Peter, the aged, the zealous, the first of the apostles, one of the three most highly favoured by his Lord, "was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles,"—the heathens converted to the Christian faith,—as having been peculiarly taught of God, that he "should not call any man common or unclean." (Acts x. 28.) "But when they were come, he separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles,"—not regarding the ceremonial law of Moses,—“why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. ii. 11, &c.) Here is also plain, undeniable sin committed by one who was undoubtedly born of God. But how can this be reconciled with the assertion of St. John, if taken in the obvious literal meaning, that “whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin?”

7. I answer, What has been long observed is this: so long as “he that is born of God keepeth himself,” (which he is able to do by the grace of God,) “the wicked one toucheth him not;” but if he keepeth not himself, if he abideth not in the faith, he may commit sin even as another man.

It is easy therefore to understand, how any of these children of God might be moved from his own steadfastness, and yet the great truth of God, declared by the apostle, remain steadfast and unshaken. He did not “keep himself,” by that grace of God which was sufficient for him. He fell, step by step, first, into negative, inward sin, not “stirring up the gift of God which was in him,” not “watching unto prayer,” not “pressing on

to the mark of the prize of his high calling:" then, into positive inward sin, inclining to wickedness with his heart, giving way to some evil desire or temper: next, he lost his faith, his sight of a pardoning God, and consequently his love of God; and, being then weak and like another man, he was capable of committing even outward sin.

8 To explain this by a particular instance: David was born of God, and saw God by faith. He loved God in sincerity. He could truly say "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth," neither person nor thing, "that I desire in comparison of thee." But still there remained in his heart that corruption of nature, which is the seed of all evil.

"He was walking upon the roof of his house," (2 Sam. xi. 2,) probably praising the God whom his soul loved, when he looked down, and saw Bathsheba. He felt a temptation; a thought which tended to evil. The Spirit of God did not fail to convince him of this. He doubtless heard and knew the warning voice; but he yielded in some measure to the thought, and the temptation began to prevail over him. Hereby his spirit was sullied: he saw God still; but it was more dimly than before. He loved God still; but not in the same degree; not with the same strength and ardour of affection. Yet God checked him again, though his Spirit was grieved; and his voice, though fainter and fainter, still whispered, "Sin lieth at the door; look unto me, and be thou saved." But he would not hear: he looked again, not unto God, but unto the forbidden object, till nature was superior to grace, and kindled lust in his soul.

The eye of his mind was now closed again, and God vanished out of his sight. Faith, the divine, supernatural intercourse with God, and the love of God, ceased together; he then rushed on as a horse into the battle, and knowingly committed the outward sin.

9. You see the unquestionable progress from grace to sin: thus it goes on, from step to step. (1.) The divine

seed of loving, conquering faith, remains in him that is born of God. "He keepeth himself," by the grace of God, and "cannot commit sin." (2.) A temptation arises; whether from the world, the flesh, or the devil, it matters not. (3.) The Spirit of God gives him warning that sin is near, and bids him more abundantly watch unto prayer. (4.) He gives way, in some degree, to the temptation, which now begins to grow pleasing to him. (5.) The Holy Spirit is grieved; his faith is weakened; and his love of God grows cold. (6.) The Spirit reproves him more sharply, and saith, "This is the way; walk thou in it." (7.) He turns away from the painful voice of God, and listens to the pleasing voice of the tempter. (8.) Evil desire begins and spreads in his soul, till faith and love vanish away: he is then capable of committing outward sin, the power of the Lord being departed from him.

10. To explain this by another instance: The apostle Peter was full of faith and of the Holy Ghost; and hereby keeping himself, he had a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

Walking thus in simplicity and godly sincerity, "before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles," knowing that what God had cleansed was not common or unclean.

But "when they were come," a temptation arose in his heart, "to fear those of the circumcision," (the Jewish converts, who were zealous for circumcision and the other rites of the Mosaic law,) and regard the favour and praise of these men, more than the praise of God.

He was warned by the Spirit that sin was near; nevertheless, he yielded to it in some degree, even to sinful fear of man, and his faith and love were proportionably weakened.

God reproved him again for giving place to the devil. Yet he would not hearken to the voice of his Shepherd; but gave himself up to that slavish fear, and thereby quenched the Spirit.

Then God disappeared, and faith and love being ex-

tingent, he committed the outward sin: *walking not uprightly*, not "according to the truth of the gospel," he "separated himself" from his Christian brethren, and by his evil example, if not advice also, "compelled even the Gentiles to live after the manner of the Jews;" to entangle themselves again with that "yoke of bondage," from which "Christ had set them free."

Thus it is unquestionably true, that he who is born of God; keeping himself, doth not, cannot commit sin; and yet, if he keepeth not himself, he may commit all manner of sin with greediness.

III. 1. From the preceding considerations we may learn, first, to give a clear and incontestable answer to a question which has frequently perplexed many who were sincere of heart: "Does sin precede or follow the loss of faith? Does a child of God first commit sin, and thereby lose his faith? Or does he lose his faith first, before he can commit sin?"

I answer, Some sin of omission, at least, must necessarily precede the loss of faith; some inward sin: but the loss of faith must precede the committing outward sin.

The more any believer examines his own heart, the more will he be convinced of this: that faith, working by love, excludes both inward and outward sin from a soul watching unto prayer; that nevertheless we are even then liable to temptation, particularly to the sin that did easily beset us; that if the loving eye of the soul be steadily fixed on God, the temptation soon vanishes away: but if not, if we are *εξελακομενοι*, (as the apostle James speaks, chap. i. 14,) *drawn out* of God by our *own desire*, and *δελταζομενοι*, *caught by the bait* of present or promised pleasures; then that desire, conceived in us, brings forth sin; and having by that inward sin destroyed our faith, it casts us headlong into the snare of the devil, so that we may commit any outward sin whatever.

2. From what has been said, we may learn, secondly, what the life of God in the soul of a believer is; where

in it properly consists; and what is immediately and necessarily implied therein. It immediately and necessarily implies the continual inspiration of God's Holy Spirit; God's breathing into the soul, and the soul's breathing back what it first receives from God; a continual action of God upon the soul, and a reaction of the soul upon God; an unceasing presence of God, the loving, pardoning God, manifested to the heart, and perceived by faith; and an unceasing return of love, praise, and prayer, offering up all the thoughts of our hearts, all the words of our tongues, all the works of our hands, all our body, soul, and spirit, to be a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God in Christ Jesus.

3. And hence we may, thirdly, infer the absolute necessity of this reaction of the soul, (whatsoever it be called,) in order to the continuance of the divine life therein. For it plainly appears, God does not continue to act upon the soul, unless the soul reacts upon God. He prevents us indeed with the blessings of his goodness. He first loves us, and manifests himself unto us. While we are yet afar off, he calls us to himself, and shines upon our hearts. But if we do not then love him who first loved us; if we will not hearken to his voice; if we turn our eye away from him, and will not attend to the light which he pours in upon us; his Spirit will not always strive: he will gradually withdraw, and leave us to the darkness of our own hearts. He will not continue to breathe into our soul, unless our soul breathes toward him again; unless our love, and prayer, and thanksgiving return to him, a sacrifice wherewith he is well pleased.

4. Let us learn, lastly, to follow that direction of the great apostle, "Be not high-minded, but fear." Let us fear sin, more than death or hell. Let us have a jealous (though not painful) fear, lest we should lean to our own deceitful hearts. "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." Even he who now standeth fast in the grace of God, in the faith that overcometh the world, may nevertheless fall into inward sin, and thereby "make

shipwreck of his faith." And how easily then will outward sin regain its dominion over him! Thou, therefore, O man of God! watch always, that thou mayest always hear the voice of God! Watch, that thou mayest pray without ceasing, at all times, and in all places, pouring out thy heart before him! So shalt thou always believe, and always love, and never commit sin

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### QUESTIONS ON SERMON XIX.

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Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) Are the new birth and justification the same?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) Although inseparable, how are they distinguished?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What has been the result of not observing this wide difference?

Ques. 4. (I. 1.) What does he first consider?

Ques. 5. (I. 2.) What does the spiritual birth resemble?

Ques. 6. (I. 3.) What is said of the unborn child?

Ques. 7. (I. 4.) Why is the child a stranger to the visible world?

Ques. 8. (I. 5.) What follows the natural birth?

Ques. 9. (I. 6.) How is the analogy stated?

Ques. 10. (I. 7.) Why is not the "other world" discerned?

Ques. 11. (I. 8.) What follows the new birth?

Ques. 12. (I. 9.) What is said of his spiritual sight?

Ques. 13. (I. 10.) And of his hearing?

Ques. 14. (II. 1.) What is the second inquiry?

Ques. 15. (II. 2.) What is here understood by sin?

Ques. 16. (II. 3.) What difficulty immediately occurs?

Ques. 17. (II. 4.) Was David born of God? And when? Did he afterward commit sin?

Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What melancholy instances occurred in the days of the apostles?

Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What more astonishing instance is mentioned?

Ques. 20. (II. 7.) How does he answer the question?

Ques. 21. (II. 8.) How is this explained?

Ques. 22. (II. 9.) What is the progress from grace to sin?

Ques. 23. (II. 10.) How is this explained by a particular instance?

Ques. 24. (III. 1.) What do we learn from the preceding?

Ques. 25. (III. 2.) What do we learn secondly?

Ques. 26. (III. 3.) What is the third inference?

Ques. 27. (III. 4.) What do we learn lastly?

Ques. 28. (III. 5.) What caution concludes the discourse?

SERMON XX.  
INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

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"THIS sermon," says Prof. Burwash, "was evidently preached and published to prevent misunderstanding between those (Arminian and Calvinist) who preached salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It was inserted in its present position—after the sermons which treat of inherent righteousness, and before the exposition of the law of Christian duty—in the edition of 1771, partly to guard Mr. Wesley's doctrine on these subjects from misconception, and likewise to mark the perfect consistency of the scriptural doctrine of faith in the atonement with the scriptural doctrine of Christian holiness. It allows, but does not encourage, the use of the term 'imputed righteousness;' and it very clearly defines the *only sense* in which the term can be safely used. It does not propound a theory of atonement (a fixed theory is absolutely necessary to the theology of imputation), but it lays down important principles which must guide us if we would frame a theory in harmony with Methodist theology.

"1. It teaches us to look at the atonement in the light of conscious faith.

"2. It teaches us to separate from that faith those peculiarities which are accidental, the prejudices of our theories.

"3. It presents the atonement not as the means of producing faith (moral view), but as the absolute foundation on which faith rests.

"4. It presents the atonement not as an expedient by  
(400)

which difficulties in the way of forgiveness may be removed, but as the real basis, or ground, of forgiveness.

"5. It is a basis of *forgiveness*, not of mere legal revocation of sentence.

"For Mr. Wesley's practical theology a theory of atonement was by no means necessary. He required only the statement of the great scriptural fact that the work of Christ is the 'objective ground of the forgiveness of sins.' In presenting this fact he sometimes uses the language of Anselm, calling this work a satisfaction to divine justice, as when he says, in reply to the Roman Catechism, 'What can make satisfaction to God but the obedience and death of his Son?' The note on Rom. iii. 25, 26 is also decidedly Anselmic in its tone. The note on 1 John i. 9 is still stronger, going almost to the full extent of the Calvinistic version of Anselm.

"In the other passages he uses the language of the Arminians, presenting the work of Christ as a sacrifice, or oblation, to God. This is especially the case in Sermon V., i. 9. 'Even so by the *sacrifice for sin* made by the second Adam, as the representative of us all, *God is so far reconciled to the world that he hath given them a new covenant*, the plain condition whereof being once fulfilled, 'there is no more condemnation' for us, but 'we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ.' This last passage is probably the most exact statement of the work of Christ to be found in Mr. Wesley's writings. This statement is essentially distinct from any Calvinistic presentation of what has been effected for us by the death of Christ. That work is here the ground of *conditional forgiveness* for all, not of absolute and unconditional *acquittal* for a defined part. Still, even here there is but an Arminian statement of the great fact of atonement, not a theory. We do not know that Mr. Wesley, in any of his writings, accepts or even alludes to the Grotian view, which is, after all, but a wider form of the theory of moral influence."

We think the moral theory of the atonement is in con-

flict with the spirit as well as with the letter of Mr. Wesley's theology. As to the theory presented by Grotius, it was so liable to grave objection that he has been charged by other than Calvinists with Socinian views. However that may be, it is certain that Mr. Wesley, in order to avoid disputations which were not essential to the work in which he was engaged, did frequently consent to the use of terms which he disliked, and would not have employed of his own choice. "Imputed righteousness" was one of these phrases.

It seems to us that this phrase is in direct conflict with the logical expression of the doctrine of *forgiveness of sin*. "To clothe the sinner in the righteousness of Christ" was a sentiment which Mr. Wesley did not use, and to accept it seems to us to change the whole character of the sinner's relation to God. If the sinner is accounted holy in Christ, why is he therefore pardoned for sin?

While Mr. Wesley consented to the occasional use of the terms, he clearly defines his meaning, as Prof. Burwash states, in this sermon. In that definition there is no semblance of Calvinism.

#### ANALYSIS OF SERMON XX.

Unfortunate character of religious controversy. Such often arises from misunderstanding terms. Importance of the truth expressed in the words of the text. Yet here Christians differ, but more in *language* than in *opinion*, and more in *opinion* than in real *experience*.

I. What is the righteousness of Christ?

1. Divine, as the holy God. 2. Human, as Mediator. With this alone we have to do. This is internal, perfect purity; and external, including perfect innocence, perfect obedience, and perfect suffering of God's will. These last two, active and passive, never *separated*.

II. In what sense is it imputed to us?

All agree that it is imputed only to believers when they believe. There are differences of expression and of views,

even where there is sound faith. The dying Bellarmine. It is imputed *in this sense* to believers, "That they are forgiven and accepted not for the sake of any thing in them, or of any thing that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ has done for them; . . . . And this is the means not only of our obtaining the favor of God, but of our continuing therein."

This doctrine was constantly believed and taught by Wesley for nearly twenty-eight years in his hymns, sermons, and in the ~~the treatise~~ of justification. This doctrine is not denied by saying that faith is imputed to us for righteousness, which is the scriptural expression for the same truth. The believer may be said to be clothed, etc., meaning the same thing. We put off the filthy rags of our own righteousness *by repentance*; but inherent righteousness has its own place as the *fruit*, not the *ground*, of our acceptance. Nor is faith substituted for Christ. We build on Christ by faith. This doctrine is denied by Socinians, by the Church of Rome, and by the Mystics. We do not deny it, but we are afraid lest the *phrase* should be a cover for unrighteousness; hence we use it sparingly. Appeal to true Christians, both those who oppose and those who use these expressions.

## SERMON XX.

## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL IN WEST-STREET, SEVEN DIALS. ON  
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1765.

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*"This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness."*—JER. xxiii. 6.

1. How dreadful and how innumerable are the contests which have arisen about religion! And not only among the children of this world, among those who knew not what true religion was, but even among the children of God; those who had experienced "the kingdom of God within them;" who had tasted of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." How many of these, in all ages, instead of joining together against the common enemy, have turned their weapons against each other, and so not only wasted their precious time, but hurt one another's spirits, weakened each other's hands, and so hindered the great work of their common Master! How many of the weak have hereby been offended! How many of the lame turned out of the way! How many sinners confirmed in their disregard of all religion, and their contempt of those that profess it! And how many of "the excellent ones upon earth" have been constrained to "weep in secret places!"

2. What would not every lover of God and his neighbour do, what would he not suffer, to remedy this sore evil; to remove contention from the children of God; to restore or preserve peace among them? What but a good conscience would he think too dear to part with, in order to promote this valuable end? And suppose we cannot "make" these "wars to cease in all the world;" suppose we cannot reconcile all the children of God to

each other; however, let each do what he can; let him contribute, if it be but two mites, toward it. Happy are they who are able, in any degree, to promote "peace and good-will among men;" especially among good men: among those that are all listed under the banner of "the Prince of peace," and are therefore peculiarly engaged, "as much as lies in them," to "live peaceably with all men."

3. It would be a considerable step towards this glorious end, if we could bring good men to understand one another. Abundance of disputes arise purely from the want of this; from mere misapprehension. Frequently neither of the contending parties understands what his opponent means; whence it follows, that each violently attacks the other, while there is no real difference between them. And yet it is not always an easy matter to convince them of this; particularly when their passions are moved: it is then attended with the utmost difficulty. However, it is not impossible; especially when we attempt it, not trusting in ourselves, but having all our dependence upon Him with whom all things are possible. How soon is he able to disperse the cloud, to shine upon their hearts, and to enable them both to understand each other, and "the truth as it is in Jesus!"

4. One very considerable article of this truth is contained in the words above recited, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD our RIGHTEOUSNESS;" a truth this, which enters deep into the nature of Christianity, and in a manner supports the whole frame of it. Of this, undoubtedly, may be affirmed, what Luther affirms of a truth closely connected with it: it is *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesie*: the Christian church stands or falls with it. It is certainly the pillar and ground of that faith, of which alone cometh salvation; of that catholic or universal faith which is found in all the children of God, and which "unless a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

5. Might not one, therefore, reasonably expect that

however they differed in others, all those who name the name of Christ should agree on this point? But how far is this from being the case! There is scarce any wherein they are so little agreed; wherein those who all profess to follow Christ, seem so widely and irreconcilably to differ. I say *seem*; because I am thoroughly convinced, that many of them *only seem* to differ. The disagreement is more in words than in sentiments: they are much nearer in judgment than in language. And a wide difference in language there certainly is, not only between Protestants and Papists, but between Protestant and Protestant; yea, even between those who all believe justification by faith; who agree, as well in this, as in every other fundamental doctrine of the gospel.

6. But if the difference be more in *opinion* than real *experience*, and more in *expression* than in *opinion*, how can it be, that even the children of God should so vehemently contend with each other on the point? Several reasons may be assigned for this: the chief is, their not understanding one another; joined with too keen an attachment to their opinions and particular modes of expression.

In order to remove this, at least in some measure; in order to our understanding one another on this head; I shall, by the help of God, endeavour to show,

I. What is the righteousness of Christ:

II. When, and in what sense, it is imputed to us:

And conclude with a short and plain application.

And, I. What is the righteousness of Christ? It is twofold, either his divine or his human righteousness.

1. His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature, as he is  $\text{O } \omega\text{v}$ , He that existeth; "over all, God blessed for ever;" the Supreme; the Eternal; "equal with the Father as touching his Godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching his manhood." Now this is his eternal, essential, immutable holiness; his infinite justice, mercy, and truth; in all which, He and the Father are one.

But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness

of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. I believe few, if any, do now contend for the imputation of this righteousness to us. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation; understands it chiefly, if not solely, of his human righteousness.

2. The human righteousness of Christ belongs to him in his human nature; as he is the "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus." This is either internal or external. His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul. It is a copy of his divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness.

3. It was the least part of his external righteousness, that he did nothing amiss; that he knew no outward sin of any kind, neither was "guile found in his mouth;" that he never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action. Thus far it is only a negative righteousness, though such a one as never did, nor ever can, belong to any one that is born of a woman, save himself alone. But even his outward righteousness was positive, too: he did all things well: in every word of his tongue, in every work of his hands, he did precisely the "will of Him that sent him." In the whole course of his life, he did the will of God on earth, as the angels do it in heaven. All he acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance. The whole and every part of his obedience was complete. "He fulfilled all righteousness."

4. But his obedience implied more than all this: it implied not only doing, but suffering; suffering the whole will of God, from the time he came into the world, till "he bore our sins in his own body upon the tree;" yea, till, having made a full atonement for them, "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." This is

usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ; the former, his *active* righteousness. But as the active and ~~passive~~ *passive* righteousness of Christ were never, in fact, separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly, that Jesus is called "the Lord our righteousness."

II. But when is it that any of us may truly say, "The Lord *our* righteousness?" In other words, when is it that the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* to us, and in what sense is it imputed?

1. Look through all the world, and all the men therein are either believers or unbelievers. The first thing, then, which admits of no dispute among reasonable men is this: to all believers the righteousness of Christ is imputed; to unbelievers it is not.

But when is it imputed? When they believe: in that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes: faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. For if he believes according to Scripture, he believes in the righteousness of Christ. There is no true faith, that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness of Christ for its object.

2. It is true, believers may not all speak alike; they may not all use the same language. It is not to be expected that they should: we cannot reasonably require it of them. A thousand circumstances may cause them to vary from each other, in the manner of expressing themselves; but a difference of expression does not necessarily imply a difference of sentiment. Different persons may use different expressions, and yet mean the same thing. Nothing is more common than this, although we seldom make sufficient allowance for it. Nay, it is not easy for the same persons, when they speak of the same thing at a considerable distance of time, to use exactly the same expressions, even though they retain the same sentiments: how then can we be rigorous in requiring others to use just the same expressions with us?

3. We may go a step farther yet: Men may differ from us in their opinions, as well as their expressions, and nevertheless be partakers with us of the same precious faith. It is possible they may not have a distinct apprehension of the very blessing which they enjoy. Their ideas may not be so clear, and yet their experience may be as sound as ours. There is a wide difference between the natural faculties of men, their understandings in particular; and that difference is exceedingly increased by the manner of their education. Indeed, this alone may occasion an inconceivable difference in their opinions of various kinds; and why not upon this head, as well as on any other? But still, though their opinions, as well as expressions, may be confused and inaccurate, their hearts may cleave to God through the Son of his love, and be truly interested in his righteousness.

4. Let us then make all that allowance to others, which, were we in their place, we would desire for ourselves. Who is ignorant (to touch again on that circumstance only) of the amazing power of education? And who that knows it, can expect, suppose a member of the Church of Rome, either to think or speak clearly on this subject? And yet, if we had heard even dying Bellarmine cry out,—when he was asked, “Unto which of the saints wilt thou turn?”—*Fidere meritis Christi tutissimum*; “It is safest to trust in the merits of Christ:” would we have affirmed that, notwithstanding his wrong opinions, he had no share in His righteousness?

5. But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of any thing in them, or of any thing that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of any thing in them, or done by them, of their own righteousness or works: “Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he

saved us." "By grace ye are saved through faith,—not of works, lest any man should boast;" but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us. We are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And this is not only the means of our obtaining the favour of God, but of our continuing therein. It is thus we come to God at first; it is by the same we come unto him ever after. We walk in one and the same new and living way, till our spirit returns to God.

6. And this is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught, for near eight-and-twenty years. This I published to all the world in the year 1738, and ten or twelve times since, in those words, and many others to the same effect, extracted from the Homilies of our Church:—"These things must necessarily go together in our justification: upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice; and on our part, faith in the merits of Christ. So that the grace of God doth not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, as to *deserving* our justification." "That we are justified by faith alone, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of our works, and wholly to ascribe the *merit* and *deserving* of our justification to Christ only. Our justification comes freely of the mere mercy of God. For whereas all the world was not able to pay any part toward our ransom, it pleased Him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and his justice satisfied. Christ, therefore, is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him."

7. The Hymns published a year or two after this, and since republished several times, (a clear testimony that my judgment was still the same,) speak full to the same purpose. To cite all the passages to this effect, would be to transcribe a great part of the volumes. Take one for all, which was reprinted seven years ago.

five years ago, two years ago, and some months since:—

“Jesu, thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress:  
Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.”

The whole hymn expresses the same sentiment, from the beginning to the end.

8. In the Sermon on Justification, published nineteen, and again seven or eight years ago, I express the same thing in these words: (page 70 :) “In consideration of this,—that the Son of God hath ‘tasted death for every man,’ God hath now ‘reconciled the world unto himself, not imputing to them their’ former ‘trespasses.’ So that for the sake of his well-beloved Son, of what he hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition, (which himself also enables us to perform,) both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in his favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.”

9. This is more largely and particularly expressed in the Treatise on Justification which I published last year: “If we take the phrase of imputing Christ’s righteousness, for the bestowing (as it were) the righteousness of Christ, including his obedience, as well passive as active, in the return of it; that is, in the privileges, blessings, and benefits purchased by it; so a believer may be said to be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed. The meaning is, God justifies the believer for the sake of Christ’s righteousness, and not for any righteousness of his own. So Calvin: (Institut., l. 2, c. 17 :) ‘Christ, by his obedience, procured and merited for us grace or favour with God the Father.’ Again: ‘Christ, by his obedience, procured or purchased righteousness for us.’ And yet again: ‘All such expressions as these,—that we are justified by the grace of God, that Christ is our righteousness, that righteousness was procured for us by the death and resurrection of Christ, import the same thing; namely, that the righteousness of

Christ, both his active and passive righteousness, is the meritorious cause of our justification, and has procured for us at God's hand, that, upon our believing, we should be accounted righteous by him.'” (Page 5.)

10. But perhaps some will object, “Nay, but you affirm that faith is imputed to us for righteousness.” St Paul affirms this over and over; therefore I affirm it too. Faith is imputed for righteousness to every believer; namely, faith in the righteousness of Christ. But this is exactly the same thing which has been said before: for by that expression I mean neither more nor less than that we are justified by faith, not by works; or that every believer is forgiven and accepted, merely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered.

11. But is not a believer invested or clothed with the righteousness of Christ? Undoubtedly he is. And, accordingly, the words above recited are the language of every believing heart:—

“ Jesu, thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress.”

That is, “For the sake of thy active and passive righteousness, I am forgiven and accepted of God.”

But must not we put off the filthy rags of our own righteousness, before we can put on the spotless righteousness of Christ? Certainly we must; that is, in plain terms, we must repent before we can believe the gospel. We must be cut off from dependence upon ourselves, before we can truly depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in his. Till we are delivered from trusting in any thing that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what he has done and suffered. First, we receive the sentence of death in ourselves: then, we trust in Him that lived and died for us.

12. But do not you believe inherent righteousness? Yes, in its proper place; not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as the fruit of it; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon

it. That is, I believe God implants righteousness in every one to whom he has imputed it. I believe, "Jesus Christ is made of God unto us sanctification," as well as "righteousness;" or, that God sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in him. They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed are made righteous by the Spirit of Christ; are renewed in the image of God "after the likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness and true holiness."

13. But do not you put faith in the room of Christ, or of his righteousness? By no means: I take particular care to put each of these in its proper place. The righteousness of Christ is the whole and sole foundation of all our hope. It is by faith that the Holy Ghost enables us to build upon this foundation. God gives this faith; in that moment we are accepted of God; and yet, not for the sake of that faith, but of what Christ has done and suffered for us. You see, each of these has its proper place, and neither clashes with the other: we believe, we love, we endeavour to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless: yet,—

"While thus we bestow  
Our moments below,  
Ourselves we forsake,  
And refuge in Jesus's righteousness take.  
His passion alone,  
The foundation we own;  
And pardon we claim,  
And eternal redemption, in Jesus's name."

14. I therefore no more deny the righteousness of Christ, than I deny the Godhead of Christ: and a man may full as justly charge me with denying the one as the other. Neither do I deny imputed righteousness: this is another unkind and unjust accusation. I always did, and do still continually affirm, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to every believer. But who deny it? Why, all infidels, whether baptized or unbaptized; all who affirm the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a cunningly devised fable; all Socinians and Arians; all who deny the supreme Godhead

of the Lord that bought them; they, of consequence, deny his divine righteousness, as they suppose him to be a mere creature; and they deny his human righteousness, as imputed to any man, seeing they believe every one is accepted for his own righteousness.

15. The human righteousness of Christ, at least the imputation of it, as the whole and sole meritorious cause of the justification of a sinner before God, is likewise denied by the members of the Church of Rome; by all of them who are true to the principles of their own Church. But, undoubtedly, there are many among them whose experience goes beyond their principles; who, though they are far from expressing themselves justly, yet feel what they know not how to express. Yea, although their conceptions of this great truth be as crude as their expressions, yet with their hearts they believe: they rest on Christ alone, both unto present and eternal salvation.

16. With these we may rank those even in the Reformed Churches, who are usually termed Mystics. One of the chief of these, in the present century, (at least in England,) was Mr. Law. It is well known that he absolutely and zealously denied the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as zealously as Robert Barclay, who scruples not to say, "Imputed righteousness!—imputed nonsense!" The body of the people known by the name of Quakers espouse the same sentiment. Nay, the generality of those who profess themselves members of the Church of England are either totally ignorant of the matter, and know nothing about imputed righteousness, or deny this and justification by faith together, as destructive of good works. To these we may add a considerable number of the people vulgarly styled Anabaptists, together with thousands of Presbyterians and Independents, lately enlightened by the writings of Dr. Taylor. On the last I am not called to pass any sentence: I leave them to him that made them. But will any one dare to affirm that all Mystics, (such as Mr. Law, in particular,) all Quakers, all Presbyterians, or

Independents, and all members of the Church of England who are not clear in their opinions or expressions, are void of all Christian experience?—that, consequently, they are all in a state of damnation, “without hope, without God in the world?” However confused their ideas may be, however improper their language, may there not be many of them whose heart is right toward God, and who effectually know “the Lord our righteousness?”

17. But, blessed be God, we are not among those who are so dark in their conceptions and expressions. We no more deny the phrase than the thing; but we are unwilling to obtrude it on other men. Let them use either this or such other expressions as they judge to be more exactly scriptural, provided their heart rests only on what Christ hath done and suffered, for pardon, grace, and glory. I cannot express this better than in Mr. Hervey’s words, worthy to be wrote in letters of gold: “We are not solicitous as to any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled as repenting criminals at Christ’s feet, let them rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blessed immortality.”

18 Is there any need, is there any possibility, of saying more? Let us only abide by this declaration, and all the contention about this or that particular phrase is torn up by the roots. Keep to this,—“All who are humbled as repenting criminals at Christ’s feet, and rely as devoted pensioners on his merits, are in the way to a blessed immortality;” and what room for dispute? Who denies this? Do we not all meet on this ground? What then shall we wrangle about? A man of peace here proposes terms of accommodation to all the contending parties. We desire no better: we accept of the terms: we subscribe to them with heart and hand. Whoever refuses so to do, set a mark upon that man! He is an enemy of peace, a troubler of Israel, a disturber of the church of God.

19 In the mean time, what we are afraid of is this;

—lest any should use the phrase, “The righteousness of Christ,” or, “The righteousness of Christ is imputed to me,” as a cover for his unrighteousness. We have known this done a thousand times. A man has been reproved, suppose, for drunkenness: “Oh,” said he, “I pretend to no righteousness of *my own*; Christ is *my righteousness*.” Another has been told, that “the extortioner, the unjust shall not inherit the kingdom of God:” he replies, with all assurance, “I am unjust in myself, but I have a spotless righteousness in Christ.” And thus, though a man be as far from the practice as from the tempers of a Christian; though he neither has the mind which was in Christ, nor in any respect walks as he walked; yet he has armour of proof against all conviction, in what he calls “the righteousness of Christ.”

20. It is the seeing so many deplorable instances of this kind, which makes us sparing in the use of these expressions. And I cannot but call upon all of you who use them frequently, and beseech you in the name of God our Saviour, whose you are, and whom you serve, earnestly to guard all that hear you against this accursed abuse of them. Oh, warn them (it may be they will hear *your* voice) against “continuing in sin that grace may abound!” Warn them against making “Christ the minister of sin;” against making void that solemn decree of God, “without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” by a vain imagination of being *holy in Christ*! Oh, warn them that if they remain unrighteous, the righteousness of Christ will profit them nothing! Cry aloud, (is there not a cause?) that for this very end the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, that “the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us;” and that we may “live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.”

It remains only to make a short and plain application. And, first, I would address myself to you who violently oppose these expressions, and are ready to condemn all that use them as Antinomians. But is not

this bending the bow too much the other way? Why should you condemn all who do not speak just as you do? Why should you quarrel with them, for using the phrases they like, any more than they with you for taking the same liberty? Or, if they do quarrel with you upon that account, do not imitate the bigotry which you blame. At least, allow them the liberty which they ought to allow you. And why should you be angry at an expression? "Oh, it has been abused!" And what expression has not? However, the abuse may be removed, and at the same time the use remain.

Above all, be sure to retain the important sense which is couched under that expression: "All the blessings I enjoy, all I hope for in time and in eternity, are given wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered for me."

I would, secondly, add a few words to you who are fond of these expressions. And permit me to ask, Do not I allow enough? What can any reasonable man desire more? I allow the whole sense which you contend for; that we have every blessing through the righteousness of God our Saviour. I allow *you* to use whatever expressions you choose, and that a thousand times over; only guarding them against that dreadful abuse, which you are as deeply concerned to prevent as I am. I myself frequently use the expression in question,—imputed righteousness; and often put this and the like expressions into the mouth of a whole congregation. But allow me the liberty of conscience herein: allow me the right of private judgment. Allow me to use it just as often as I judge it preferable to any other expression; and be not angry with me if I cannot judge it proper to use any one expression every two minutes. You may, if you please; but do not condemn me because I do not. Do not, for this, represent me as a Papist, or "an enemy to the righteousness of Christ." Bear with me, as I do with you; else how shall we "fulfil the law of Christ?" Do not make tragical out-cries, as though I were "subverting the very founda-

tions of Christianity." Whoever does this, does me much wrong: the Lord lay it not to his charge! I lay, and have done for many years, the very same foundation with you. And, indeed, "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ." I build inward and outward holiness thereon, as you do, even by faith. Do not, therefore, suffer any distaste, or unkindness, no, nor any shyness or coldness of your heart. If there were a difference of opinion, where is our religion, if we cannot think and let think? What hinders but you may forgive me as easily as I may forgive you? How much more, when there is only a difference of expression? Nay, hardly so much as that? all the dispute being only, whether a particular mode of expression shall be used more or less frequently? Surely we must earnestly desire to contend with one another, before we can make this a bone of contention! Oh, let us not any more, for such very trifles as these, give our common enemies room to blaspheme! Rather let us at length cut off occasion from them that seek occasion! Let us at length (Oh, why was it not done before?) join hearts and hands in the service of our great Master. As we have "one Lord, one faith, one hope of our calling," let us all strengthen each other's hands in God, and with one heart and one mouth declare to all mankind "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XX.

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What is said about the contest concerning religion?

Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What ought we to do to avoid these?

Ques. 3. (§ 3.) What is a considerable step toward this end?

Ques. 4. (§ 4.) What considerable article of truth is mentioned?

Ques. 5. (§ 5.) Should there be agreement on this point?

Ques. 6. (§ 6.) Is the difference in opinion rather than in experience?

Ques. 7. (I. 1.) How is this definition divided?

Ques. 8. (I. 1.) To what does the divine righteousness belong?

Ques. 9. (I. 2.) What is the human righteousness?

Ques. 10. (I. 3.) What is the negative side of this?

Ques. 11. (I. 4.) Does his obedience imply more than this?

Ques. 12. (II. 1.) How is the world divided?

Ques. 13. (II. 2.) Do believers speak the same language?

Ques. 14. (II. 3.) May we go farther than this? What is said of those who differ from us?

Ques. 15. (II. 4.) How should we make allowance for others?

Ques. 16. (II. 5.) In what sense is this righteousness imputed?

Ques. 17. (II. 6.) What appeal does he make to his early teaching?

Ques. 18. (II. 7.) What does he say of his published hymns?

Ques. 19. (II. 8.) And of the sermon on justification?

Ques. 20. (II. 9.) Where is the same view more largely expressed?

Ques. 21. (II. 10.) What is said of faith imputed for righteousness?

Ques. 22. (II. 11.) How does he explain the use of the expression that a believer is invested, or clothed, with the righteousness of Christ?

Ques. 23. (II. 12.) What is said of inherent righteousness?

Ques. 24. (II. 13.) Is faith to be put in the room of Christ?

Ques. 25. (II. 14.) How does he repel the charge of denying the righteousness of Christ?

Ques. 26. (II. 15.) What does the Church of Rome deny?

Ques. 27. (II. 16.) Who are ranked with these?

Ques. 28. (II. 17.) What does he say of the liberty he grants to others?

Ques. 29. (II. 18.) To what ought we to keep?

Ques. 30. (II. 19.) Here he explains his meaning fully. Does he not say that the righteousness of Christ is not a cover for the unrighteousness of men?

Ques. 31. (II. 20.) Why is he sparing in the use of these terms?

Ques. 32. (II. 21.) How does the sermon conclude?

INTRODUCTORY NOTES  
TO THE  
SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

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“THE sermons now before us,” says Prof. Burwash, “contain Mr. Wesley’s system of Christian ethics. It is a system thoroughly in harmony with his theology, and growing out of it as the branch from the trunk of the tree. In the great theological works of the present age Christian ethics are universally recognized as a most important province of Christian theology. The distinction between Christian ethics and the old philosophical systems of ethics is also very clearly drawn. ‘The latter proceed from the moral consciousness as such,’ while the former grow from the moral consciousness as a ‘*religious and evangelical Christian consciousness of God.*’ Hagenbach says: ‘Christian ethics expound the theory of the *inward* and *outward* moral relations of man as growing out of *living faith* in Christ.’ No definition could more completely express that which has been done by Mr. Wesley in these sermons. His grand division of the subject into *subjective character* and *objective motive* exactly corresponds to the ‘inward and outward moral relations’ of Hagenbach.

“The subject of Christian duty has always occupied a very important place in religious teaching of all schools. Prior to the Reformation the Latin writers might be divided into two great classes: those whose conception of Christian duty lay in a prescribed form of outward observances, and those with whom the essence of duty lay in certain inward states.

Both these had their doctrine, or ideal, of Christian perfection. These ethical systems were not only a part of religion, but constituted almost the whole of it. The Reformation, with its doctrine of faith as the central element of religion, of course differed largely from this teaching. Christian ethics were not discarded, but they occupied a new and less prominent relation to religion. The starting-point of ethics was now the absolute sovereignty of God, whose immutable law was the absolute standard of right and the only perfection; and Christian ethics were the *imperfect* outgoing of the new life toward this ideal, of which, however, it could not but fall infinitely short. This outgoing of the new life toward duty was incapable of perfection and incapable of merit, and was in no proper sense a *condition of probation* or of *salvation*. The treatment of ethics in these theological systems was not so much an exposition of Christian duty as an exposition of absolute moral law, in the light of which men might see their own sinfulness and the glory of Christ's atoning work. The basis universally adopted for this exposition was the moral law in the Ten Commandments.

"In Mr. Wesley's time writers on moral duty might be divided into three classes: (1) Many of the Church writers, such as Taylor and Law, approached very closely to the Romish methods of expounding Christian duty. (2) The descendants of the Puritans very faithfully represented the ethical teaching of the Reformation, and especially of Calvin. (3) There had grown up a new school of ethical writers, who revived the philosophical ethics of the ancients, and in the case of Butler carried them to a perfection not surpassed before or perhaps since. From all these Mr. Wesley's treatment of the great question of human duty differed. It would be too much to say that he inaugurated a new and original system or method of treatment, and yet in many respects this is true. We have already seen how he gathered into one in his own religious life the great truths of religion and duty from all branches of the Christian Church, and in

this sense it would be wrong to claim too much credit for originality. But in this he was original, and was far in advance of his age, and has not been surpassed by the best expounder of Christian ethics of the present century, in that he combined into one the probational ethics of the Romish Church, the absolute and evangelical ethics of the theology of the Reformation, and the highest principles of philosophical ethics, and from them all evolved a conception of *Christian duty* in which God is supreme sovereign in a true moral and not in a mere determinist sense, his nature the absolute fountain of light and his glory the supreme end, in which the love of Christ is supreme motive, and of which Christian perfection is the blessed realization in the living experience of the Church.

"In selecting a scriptural basis for the exposition of Christian duty, Mr. Wesley was especially wise and fortunate in selecting the Sermon on the Mount rather than the Old Testament Decalogue. The Sermon on the Mount is distinguished by the following peculiarities of its ethical teaching:

"1. It deals with the inward character as well as with the outward life.

"2. It treats of outward acts from the stand-point of intention, by which their moral quality is determined and they are intimately linked to the inner man.

"3. It thus presents not a mere negative morality of abstinence from sin, but a positive moral quality, a holiness of *all acts*, even those otherwise indifferent.

"4. It uses specific moral states and acts merely as illustrations of *general principles* which are of universal application.

"5. It unites the inward and subjective law of love with the objective law of responsibility to a supreme *authority* enforced by reward and punishment. It thus becomes a law of Christian, though not of Adamic, *probation*. All these principles were clearly apprehended by Wesley, and will be found to permeate his sermons and his entire theology as they do this great sermon of our Lord. The last of these

especially is exhibited in the Wesleyan theology as in no other system. It holds, without question or possibility of cavil, the great doctrine of *man's free responsibility*, and in a thoroughly evangelical manner it evolves all Christian morality from *faith working by love.*"

#### ANALYSIS OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

The teacher here is the King, the Lawgiver, the Eternal Wisdom. He here teaches the perfect will of God, the nature of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord. He teaches this to the whole race of mankind. He teaches it here in a comprehensive manner, such as we have nowhere else except in the Decalogue; and in the spirit of love, yet with authority. The discourse divides itself into three principal branches:

I. In the fifth chapter the sum of all true religion—the right state of the heart—is laid down, and guarded against the false glosses of men.

II. In the sixth chapter are given the rules of right intention, which we are to preserve in all our outward actions unmixed with worldly desires or anxious cares even for necessities of life.

III. In the seventh chapter are given cautions against the main hinderances of religion, and exhortations to its practice.

I. The sum of all true religion in eight particulars, and explained and guarded against the false glosses of men. (Sermons XXI.—XXV.)

1. Poverty of spirit, or conviction of sin, renouncing ourselves and our own righteousness. To which is given the promise of the kingdom of heaven, which is "righteousness," etc.

2. Mourning, contrition, sorrow for sin and after God.

3. Meekness, restraining all violent passions. Guarded by our Lord against interpretations suited to the weak sinfulness of the human heart, and the way of reconciliation defined.

4. Hunger and thirst after righteousness. Earnest desire which cannot be satisfied with a mere outward righteousness.

5. The merciful, which as one aspect includes all tender charity or love. (1 Cor. xiii.)

6. Purity of heart, which our Lord illustrates from the seventh and the third commands of the Decalogue.

7. Peace-makers. The spirit of universal benevolence. Doing good to all men.

8. Patient endurance of persecution, extending even to loving and praying for enemies. Such is the inward state of heart of the Christian. The beauty of holiness, which in kind, though not in degree, is perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

But this religion is not to be merely inward. It must diffuse itself to others, must shine as the light, and be seen in good works. Christianity is a social and not a solitary religion. This appears from Scripture and from the reasons of the case. The opposite doctrine is shown to be a mistake. But the manifestation of our religion must be purely for the glory of God. Nor does this inward religion dispense with obligation to the external moralities of the Decalogue. . . . Violation of the least command must be fatal to enjoyment of this inward kingdom. It is opposed to Antinomianism, but its perfection is infinitely beyond mere outward Pharisaism, both in the strictness of the outward act, and especially in the inward spirit.

II. The complement of that inward holiness—those dispositions, tempers, and affections which spring from living faith in Christ, and which manifest themselves in all good works, and in keeping of law both in spirit and in letter—is *right intention*.

Purity of intention gives moral quality to all acts. This our Lord illustrates—

1. In acts of mercy, which are vitiated if done to be seen of men.

2. In acts of religion, as prayer and fasting, which must

be the simple outpouring of the heart of God alone, of which our Lord gives us the pattern, covering all that we can reasonably pray for or earnestly desire. So also in fasting we must consider: (1) The nature of this religious act; (2) the reasons, grounds, and ends of it; (3) whence we may answer objections against it; and (4) learn the right manner of performing it.

3. In the acts of common life. Business. Intention is the eye of the soul. Purity fills it with light, sin with darkness. A double intention of life is not possible. We cannot lay up treasures on earth and preserve purity of intention. But this does not exclude provision for honest living, for the comfort of our family, and for the proper maintenance of our worldly business. But the love of money and the desire for and endeavor after riches, and the trust in riches and seeking their increase, are excluded. We cannot serve two masters.

III. The main hinderances to this religion.

1. Judging, or the censorious spirit which indulges speaking evil of either the present or absent, and all thinking evil and condemning the innocent beyond what they deserve.

2. The broad, easy-going, careless spirit. "Wide is the gate and broad the way," etc. Whereas the way of life is a narrow way, a way of universal holiness, to be entered only by the most earnest striving.

3. False teaching. Responsibility of teachers. The appearance of innocence, usefulness, religion, love, etc. What are the practical fruits of these doctrines? In the teachers themselves? In their disciples?

Final exhortation. The house built on the sand. Saying, "Lord, Lord!" Expecting to reach heaven by any other than the way of holiness, such as orthodoxy, innocence, external good works.

The house built on the rock. Summary of true religious life, and application to his hearers.

## SERMON XXI.

### ANALYSIS.

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I. **THE time.** After our Lord had gone through Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The natural consequence was the gathering together of a great multitude, who followed him from place to place.

II. **The speaker.** The Lord of heaven and earth, the Creator of all. The eternal wisdom of the Father, who made man and understands his frame. This knowledge the great Prophet employed in giving the precepts and commandments which infinite wisdom knew were adapted to the wants of his creatures.

III. **The subject.** The way to heaven. He who came from heaven reveals the means by which we may come to the place he has prepared for us after the duties of this life are performed. The royal way which leads to the kingdom is pointed out. Nothing superfluous is here recorded, and nothing is omitted. While explaining faithful and true sayings, he refutes the errors and mistakes of the scribes and Pharisees, and rebukes the teachers who had perverted the ways of truth and righteousness.

IV. **The audience.** Not the twelve disciples only. For these a small room had been sufficient. Here on the ascent of the mountain a great multitude is gathered. To these severally, the twelve included, the sermon is delivered; but not for them only. It is intended for all men and for all ages. The whole race of mankind is here taught the way of salvation.

V. The manner. He spake as never man spake. As one having authority, and not as the scribes. He does not teach as Paul or Peter or John; nor yet as Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews. His manner differs from his own ordinary course. At no other time or place does it seem that he intended to give us a full prospect of Christianity. Particular branches he had described on many occasions, but never before was there a purpose to present the whole system in its connected parts. His words are spoken in amazing love; not with the terrors of Sinai, but with the mild, persuasive appeals which address the reason and inform the understanding. The discourse is divided into three principal branches—the first, contained in the fifth chapter, the sum of all true religion; the second, in the sixth chapter, the rule for right intention; the third, in the seventh chapter, cautions against the main hinderances of religion.

VI. The sum of all true religion. The foundation of all is poverty of spirit. Not merely freedom from covetousness. In what sense St. Paul says “the love of money is the root of all evil.” Conviction of sin and consequent repentance. Lowliness of heart is true Christian humility. The blessedness of mourners. The promise, “They shall be comforted.” The application.

## SERMON XXI.

## UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## DISCOURSE I.

- “ And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: ”*  
*“ And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, ”*  
*“ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ”*  
*“ Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.”—*  
 MATT. V. 1-4.

1. OUR Lord had now “gone about all Galilee,” (Matt. iv. 23,) beginning at the time “when John was cast into prison,” (verse 12,) not only “teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom,” but likewise “healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.” It was a natural consequence of this, that “there followed him great multitudes from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from the region beyond Jordan.” (Verse 25.) “And seeing the multitudes,” whom no synagogue could contain, even had there been any at hand, “he went up into a mountain,” where there was room for all that came unto him from every quarter. “And when he was set,” as the manner of the Jews was, “his disciples came unto him. And he opened his mouth,” (an expression denoting the beginning of a solemn discourse,) “and taught them, saying”—

2. Let us observe, who it is that is here speaking, that we may take heed how we hear. It is the Lord of

heaven and earth, the Creator of all; who, as such, has a right to dispose of all his creatures; the Lord our Governor, whose kingdom is from everlasting, and ruleth over all; the great Lawgiver, who can well enforce all his laws, being "able to save and to destroy," yea, to punish with "everlasting destruction from his presence and from the glory of his power." It is the eternal Wisdom of the Father, who knoweth whereof we are made, and understands our inmost frame; who knows how we stand related to God, to one another, to every creature which God hath made, and, consequently, how to adapt every law he prescribes to all the circumstances wherein he hath placed us. It is He who is "loving unto every man, whose mercy is over all his works;" the God of love, who, having emptied himself of his eternal glory, is come forth from his Father to declare his will to the children of men, and then goeth again to the Father; who is sent of God "to open the eyes of the blind, and to give light to them that sit in darkness." It is the great Prophet of the Lord, concerning whom God had solemnly declared long ago, "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him;" (Deut. xviii. 19;) or, as the apostle expresses it, "Every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts iii. 23.)

3. And what is it which he is teaching? The Son of God, who came from heaven, is here showing us the way to heaven; to the place which he hath prepared for us; the glory he had before the world began. He is teaching us the true way to life everlasting; the royal way which leads to the kingdom; and the only true way,—for there is none besides; all other paths lead to destruction. From the character of the Speaker, we are well assured that he hath declared the full and perfect will of God. He hath uttered not one tittle too much, nothing more than he had received of the Father; nor too little,—he hath not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God; much less hath he uttered any thing

wrong, any thing contrary to the will of him that sent him. All his words are true and right concerning all things, and shall stand fast for ever and ever.

And we may easily remark, that in explaining and confirming these faithful and true sayings, he takes care to refute not only the mistakes of the scribes and Pharisees, which then were the false comments whereby the Jewish teachers of that age had perverted the word of God, but all the practical mistakes that are inconsistent with salvation, which should ever arise in the Christian church; all the comments whereby the Christian teachers (so called) of any age or nation should pervert the word of God, and teach unwary souls to seek death in the error of their life.

4. And hence we are naturally led to observe, whom it is that he is here teaching. Not the apostles alone: if so, he had no need to have gone up into the mountain. A room in the house of Matthew, or any of his disciples, would have contained the twelve. Nor does it in anywise appear that the disciples who came unto him were the twelve only. *Οι μαθηται αυτου*, without any force put upon the expression, may be understood of all who desired to learn of him. But to put this out of all question, to make it undeniably plain that where it is said, "He opened his mouth and taught them," the word *them* includes all the multitudes who went up with him into the mountain, we need only observe the concluding verses of the seventh chapter: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the multitudes (*οι οχλοι*) were astonished at his doctrine," or teaching; "for he taught them," the multitudes, "as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Nor was it only those multitudes who were with him on the mount, to whom he now taught the way of salvation; but all the children of men; the whole race of mankind; the children that were yet unborn; all the generations to come, even to the end of the world, who should ever hear the words of this life.

5. And this all men allow, with regard to some parts

of the ensuing discourse. No man, for instance, denies that what is said of poverty of spirit relates to all man kind. But many have supposed, that other parts concerned only the apostles, or the first Christians, or the ministers of Christ; and were never designed for the generality of men, who, consequently, have nothing at all to do with them.

But may we not justly inquire, who told them this, that some parts of this discourse concerned only the apostles, or the Christians of the apostolic age, or the ministers of Christ? Bare assertions are not a sufficient proof to establish a point of so great importance. Has then our Lord himself taught us, that some parts of his discourse do not concern all mankind? Without doubt, had it been so, he would have told us; he could not have omitted so necessary an information. But has he told us so? Where? In the discourse itself? No: here is not the least intimation of it. Has he said so elsewhere? in any other of his discourses? Not one word so much as glancing this way can we find in any thing he ever spoke, either to the multitudes or to his disciples. Has any one of the apostles, or other inspired writers, left such an instruction upon record? No such thing. No assertion of this kind is to be found in all the oracles of God. Who then are the men who are so much wiser than God?—wise so far above that is written?

6. Perhaps they will say that the reason of the thing requires such a restriction to be made. If it does, it must be on one of these two accounts; because, without such a restriction, the discourse would either be apparently absurd, or would contradict some other scripture. But this is not the case. It will plainly appear, when we come to examine the several particulars, that there is no absurdity at all in applying all which our Lord hath here delivered to all mankind. Neither will it infer any contradiction to any thing else he has delivered, nor to any other scripture whatever. Nay, it will further appear, that either all the parts of this dis

course are to be applied to men in general; or no part; seeing they are all connected together, all joined as the stones in an arch, of which you cannot take one away, without destroying the whole fabric.

7. We may, lastly, observe, how our Lord teaches here. And surely, as at all times, so particularly at this, he speaks "as never man spake." Not as the holy men of old; although they also spoke "as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Not as Peter, or James, or John, or Paul: there were indeed wise master-builders in his church; but still in this, in the degrees of heavenly wisdom, the servant is not as his Lord. No, nor even as himself at any other time, or on any other occasion. It does not appear, that it was ever his design, at any other time or place, to lay down at once the whole plan of his religion; to give us a full prospect of Christianity: to describe at large the nature of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Particular branches of this he has indeed described, on a thousand different occasions; but never, besides here, did he give, of set purpose, a general view of the whole. Nay, we have nothing else of this kind in all the Bible; unless one should except that short sketch of holiness delivered by God in those ten words or commandments to Moses, on mount Sinai. But even here how wide a difference is there between one and the other! "Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (2 Cor. iii. 10.)

8. Above all, with what amazing love does the Son of God here reveal his Father's will to man! He does not bring us again "to the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." He does not speak as when he "thundered out of heaven;" when the Highest "gave his thunder, hailstones and souls of fire." He now addresses us with his still, small voice,—"Blessed," or happy, "are the poor in spirit." Happy are the mourners; the meek; those that hunger after righteousness; the merciful; the pure in heart; happy in the end and in the way; happy in

this life, and in life everlasting! As if he had said, "Who is he that lusteth to live, and would fain see good days? Behold, I show you the thing which your soul longeth for! See the way you have so long sought in vain; the way of pleasantness; the path to calm, joyous peace, to heaven below, and heaven above!"

9. At the same time, with what authority does he teach! Well might they say, "Not as the scribes." Observe the manner, (but it cannot be expressed in words,) the air with which he speaks! Not as Moses, the servant of God; not as Abraham, his friend; not as any of the prophets; nor as any of the sons of men. It is something more than human; more than can agree to any created being. It speaks the Creator of all! A God, a God appears! Yea, Ο ΩΝ, the Being of beings, JEHOVAH, the Self-existent, the Supreme, the God who is over all, blessed for ever.

10. This divine discourse, delivered in the most excellent method, every subsequent part illustrating those that precede, is commonly, and not improperly, divided into three principal branches: the first, contained in the fifth,—the second, in the sixth,—and the third, in the seventh chapter. In the first, the sum of all true religion is laid down in eight particulars, which are explained, and guarded against the false glosses of man, in the following parts of the fifth chapter. In the second are rules for that right intention which we are to preserve in all our outward actions, unmixed with worldly desires, or anxious cares for even the necessaries of life. In the third are cautions against the main hinderances of religion, closed with an application of the whole.

I. 1. Our Lord first lays down the sum of all true religion in eight particulars, which he explains and guards against the false glosses of men to the end of the fifth chapter.

Some have supposed that he designed, in these, to point out the several stages of the Christian course; the steps which a Christian successively takes in his journey

to the promised land;—others, that all the particulars here set down belong at all times to every Christian. And why may we not allow both the one and the other? What inconsistency is there between them? It is undoubtedly true, that both poverty of spirit, and every other temper which is here mentioned, are at all times found, in a greater or less degree, in every real Christian. And it is equally true, that real Christianity always begins in poverty of spirit, and goes on in the order here set down, till the “man of God is made perfect.” We begin at the lowest of these gifts of God; yet so as not to relinquish this, when we are called of God to come up higher; but “whereunto we have already attained, we hold fast,” while we press on to what is yet before, to the highest blessings of God in Christ Jesus.

2. The foundation of all is poverty of spirit: here, therefore, our Lord begins: “Blessed,” saith he, “are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

It may not improperly be supposed, that our Lord looked on those who were round about him, and, observing, that not many rich were there, but rather the poor of the world, took occasion from thence to make a transition from temporal to spiritual things. “Blessed,” saith he, (or *happy*,—so the word should be rendered, both in this and the following verses,) “are the poor in spirit.” He does not say, they that are poor as to outward circumstances,—it being not impossible that some of these may be as far from happiness as a monarch upon his throne; but “the poor in spirit,”—they who, whatever their outward circumstances are, have that disposition of heart which is the first step to all real, substantial happiness, either in this world, or that which is to come.

3. Some have judged, that by the poor in spirit here, are meant those who love poverty; those who are free from covetousness, from the love of money; who fear, rather than desire, riches. Perhaps they have been induced so to judge, by wholly confining their thoughts to

the very term ; or by considering that weighty observation of St. Paul, that "the love of money is the root of all evil." And hence many have wholly divested themselves, not only of riches, but of all worldly goods. Hence also the vows of voluntary poverty seem to have arisen in the Romish Church ; it being supposed, that so eminent a degree of this fundamental grace must be a large step toward the "kingdom of heaven."

But these do not seem to have observed, first, that the expression of St. Paul must be understood with some restriction ; otherwise it is not true ; for the love of money is not the root, the sole root, of all evil. There are a thousand other roots of evil in the world, as sad experience daily shows. His meaning can only be, it is the root of very many evils ; perhaps of more than any single vice besides.—Secondly, that this sense of the expression, "poor in spirit," will by no means suit our Lord's present design, which is to lay a general foundation whereon the whole fabric of Christianity may be built ; a design which would be in no wise answered by guarding against one particular vice : so that, if even this were supposed to be one part of his meaning, it could not possibly be the whole.—Thirdly, that it cannot be supposed to be any part of his meaning, unless we charge him with manifest tautology ; seeing, if poverty of spirit were only freedom from covetousness, from the love of money, or the desire of riches, it would coincide with what he afterwards mentions, it would be only a branch of purity of heart.

4. Who then are "the poor in spirit?" Without question, the humble ; they who know themselves ; who are convinced of sin ; those to whom God hath given that first repentance, which is previous to faith in Christ.

One of these can no longer say, "I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing ;" as now knowing, that he is "wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." He is convinced that he is spiritually poor indeed ; having no spiritual good abiding in him. "In me," saith he, "dwelleth no good thing,"

but whatsoever is evil and abominable. He has a deep sense of the loathsome leprosy of sin, which he brought with him from his mother's womb, which overspreads his whole soul, and totally corrupts every power and faculty thereof. He sees more and more of the evil tempers which spring from that evil root; the pride and haughtiness of spirit, the constant bias to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; the vanity, the thirst after the esteem or honour that cometh from men; the hatred or envy, the jealousy or revenge, the anger, malice, or bitterness; the inbred enmity both against God and man, which appears in ten thousand shapes; the love of the world, the self-will, the foolish and hurtful desires, which cleave to his inmost soul. He is conscious how deeply he has offended by his tongue; if not by profane, immodest, untrue, or unkind words, yet by discourse which was not "good to the use of edifying," not "meet to minister grace to the hearers," which, consequently, was all corrupt in God's account, and grievous to his Holy Spirit. His evil works are now likewise ever in his sight: if he tells them, they are more than he is able to express. He may as well think to number the drops of rain, the sands of the sea, or the days of eternity.

5. His guilt is now also before his face: he knows the punishment he has deserved, were it only on account of his carnal mind, the entire, universal corruption of his nature: how much more, on account of all his evil desires and thoughts, of all his sinful words and actions: He cannot doubt for a moment, but the least of these deserves the damnation of hell,—“the worm that dieth not, and the fire that never shall be quenched.” Above all, the guilt of “not believing on the name of the only begotten Son of God” lies heavy upon him. How, saith he, shall I escape, who “neglect so great salvation!” “He that believeth not is condemned already,” and “the wrath of God abideth on him.”

6. But what shall he give in exchange for his soul, which is forfeited to the just vengeance of God?

“Wherewithal shall he come before the Lord?” How shall he pay him that he oweth? Were he from this moment to perform the most perfect obedience to every command of God, this would make no amends for a single sin, for any one act of past disobedience; seeing he owes God all the service he is able to perform, from this moment to all eternity: could he pay this, it would make no manner of amends for what he ought to have done before. He sees himself, therefore, utterly helpless with regard to atoning for his past sins; utterly unable to make any amends to God, to pay any ransom for his own soul.

But if God would forgive him all that is past, on this one condition, that he should sin no more; that for the time to come he should entirely and constantly obey all his commands; he well knows that this would profit him nothing, being a condition he could never perform. He knows and feels that he is not able to obey even the outward commands of God; seeing these cannot be obeyed while his heart remains in its natural sinfulness and corruption; inasmuch as an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit. But he cannot cleanse a sinful heart: with men this is impossible: so that he is utterly at a loss even how to begin walking in the path of God’s commandments. He knows not how to get one step forward in the way. Encompassed with sin, and sorrow, and fear, and finding no way to escape, he can only cry out, “Lord, save, or I perish!”

7. Poverty of spirit, then, as it implies the first step we take in running the race which is set before us, is a just sense of our inward and outward sins, and of our guilt and helplessness. This some have monstrously styled “the virtue of humility,” thus teaching us to be proud of knowing we deserve damnation! But our Lord’s expression is quite of another kind; conveying no idea to the hearer, but that of mere want, of naked sin, of helpless guilt and misery.

8. The great apostle, where he endeavours to bring sinners to God, speaks in a manner just answerable to

this. "The wrath of God," saith he, "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" (Rom. i. 18, &c.) a charge which he immediately fixes on the heathen world, and thereby proves they were under the wrath of God. He next shows that the Jews were no better than they, and were therefore under the same condemnation; and all this, not in order to their attaining "the noble virtue of humility," but "that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God."

He proceeds to show, that they were helpless as well as guilty; which is the plain purport of all those expressions: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified:"—"But now the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, without the law, is manifested:"—"We conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law:"—expressions all tending to the same point, even to "hide pride from man;" to humble him to the dust, without teaching him to reflect upon his humility as a virtue: to inspire him with that full, piercing conviction of his utter sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness, which casts the sinner, stripped of all, lost and undone, on this strong Helper, Jesus Christ the righteous.

9. One cannot but observe here, that Christianity begins just where heathen morality ends: poverty of spirit, conviction of sin, the renouncing ourselves, the not having our own righteousness, (the very first point in the religion of Jesus Christ,) leaving all pagan religion behind. This was ever hid from the wise men of this world; insomuch that the whole Roman language, even with all the improvements of the Augustan age, does not afford so much as a name for *humility*; (the word from whence we borrow this, as is well known, bearing in Latin a quite different meaning;) no, nor was one found in all the copious language of Greece, till it was made by the great apostle.

10. O! that we may feel what they were not able to express! Sinner, awake! Know thyself! Know and

feel, that thou wert "shapen in wickedness," and that "in sin did thy mother conceive thee;" and that thou thyself hast been heaping up sin upon sin, ever since thou couldest discern good from evil! Sink under the mighty hand of God, as guilty of death eternal; and cast off, renounce, abhor, all imagination of ever being able to help thyself! Be it all thy hope to be washed in his blood, and renewed by his almighty Spirit, who himself "bare all our sins in his own body on the tree!" So shalt thou witness, "Happy are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

11. This is that kingdom of heaven, or of God, which is within us; even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." And what is "righteousness," but the life of God in the soul; the mind which was in Christ Jesus; the image of God stamped upon the heart, now renewed after the likeness of Him that created it? What is it but the love of God, because he first loved us, and the love of all mankind for his sake?

And what is this "peace," the peace of God, but that calm serenity of soul, that sweet repose in the blood of Jesus, which leaves no doubt of our acceptance in him; which excludes all fear, but the loving, filial fear of offending our Father which is in heaven?

This inward kingdom implies also "joy in the Holy Ghost;" who seals upon our hearts "the redemption which is in Jesus," the righteousness of Christ imputed to us "for the remission of the sins that are past;" who giveth us now "the earnest of our inheritance," of the crown which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give at that day. And well may this be termed "the kingdom of heaven;" seeing it is heaven already opened in the soul; the first springing up of those rivers of pleasure which flow at God's right hand for evermore.

12. "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Whosoever thou art, to whom God hath given to be "poor in spirit," to feel thyself lost, thou hast a right thereto, through the gracious promise of Him who cannot lie. It is purchased for thee by the blood of the Lamb. It is very

nigh : thou art on the brink of heaven ! Another step, and thou enterest into the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy ! Art thou all sin ? "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world !" —all unholy ? See thy "Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous !" Art thou unable to atone for the least of thy sins ? "He is the propitiation for" all thy "sins." Now believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and all thy sins are blotted out ! Art thou totally unclean in soul and body ? Here is the "fountain for sin and uncleanness !" "Arise and wash away thy sins !" Stagger no more at the promise through unbelief ! Give glory to God ! Dare to believe ! Now cry out, from the ground of thy heart,—

"Yes, I yield, I yield, at last,  
Listen to thy speaking blood ;  
Me, with all my sins, I cast  
On my atoning God."

13. Then thou learnest of him to be "lowly of heart." And this is the true, genuine, Christian humility, which flows from a sense of the love of God, reconciled to us in Christ Jesus. Poverty of spirit, in this meaning of the word, begins where a sense of guilt and of the wrath of God ends ; and is a continual sense of our total dependence on him, for every good thought, or word, or work ; of our utter inability to all good, unless he "water us every moment ;" and an abhorrence of the praise of men, knowing that all praise is due unto God only. With this is joined a loving shame, a tender humiliation before God, even for the sins which we know he hath forgiven us, and for the sins which still remaineth in our hearts, although we know it is not imputed to our condemnation. Nevertheless, the conviction we feel of inbred sin is deeper and deeper every day. The more we grow in grace, the more do we see of the desperate wickedness of our heart. The more we advance in the knowledge and love of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, (as great a mystery as this may appear to those who know not the power of

God unto salvation,) the more do we discern of our alienation from God, of the enmity that is in our carnal mind, and the necessity of our being entirely renewed in righteousness and true holiness.

II. 1. It is true, he has scarce any conception of this who now begins to know the inward kingdom of heaven. "In his prosperity he saith, I shall never be moved; thou, Lord, hast made my hill so strong." Sin is so utterly bruised beneath his feet that he can scarce believe it remaineth in him. Even temptation is silenced, and speaks not again; it cannot approach, but stands afar off. He is borne aloft in the chariots of joy and love: he soars, "as upon the wings of an eagle." But our Lord well knew that this triumphant state does not often continue long: he therefore presently subjoins, "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."

2. Not that we can imagine this promise belongs to those who mourn only on some worldly account; who are in sorrow and heaviness merely on account of some worldly trouble or disappointment,—such as the loss of their reputation or friends, or the impairing of their fortune. As little title to it have they who are afflicting themselves, through fear of some temporal evil; or who pine away with anxious care, or that desire of earthly things which "maketh the heart sick." Let us not think these "shall receive any thing from the Lord:" he is not in all their thoughts. Therefore it is that they thus "walk in a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain." "And this shall ye have of mine hand," saith the Lord, "ye shall lie down in sorrow."

3. The mourners of whom our Lord here speaks, are those that mourn on quite another account: they that mourn after God; after Him in whom they did "rejoice with joy unspeakable," when he gave them to "taste the good," the pardoning "word, and the powers of the world to come." But he now "hides his face, and they are troubled;" they cannot see him through the dark cloud. But they see temptation and sin, which they

fondly supposed were gone never to return, arising again, following after them amain, and holding them in on every side. It is not strange if their soul is now disquieted within them, and trouble and heaviness take hold upon them. Nor will their great enemy fail to improve the occasion; to ask, "Where is now thy God? Where is now the blessedness whereof thou spakest? the beginning of the kingdom of heaven? Yea, hath God said, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee?' Surely God hath not said it. It was only a dream, a mere delusion, a creature of thy own imagination. If thy sins are forgiven, why art thou thus? Can a pardoned sinner be thus unholy?" And if then, instead of immediately crying to God, they reason with him that is wiser than they, they will be in heaviness indeed, in sorrow of heart, in anguish not to be expressed. Nay, even when God shines again upon the soul, and takes away all doubt of his past mercy, still he that is weak in faith may be tempted and troubled on account of what is to come; especially when inward sin revives, and thrusts sore at him that he may fall. Then may he again cry out,

"I have a sin of fear, that when I've spun  
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore!"—

lest I should make shipwreck of the faith, and my last state be worse than the first;—

"Lest all my bread of life should fail,  
And I sink down unchanged to hell!"

4. Sure it is, that this "affliction," for the present, "is not joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it bringeth forth peaceable fruit unto them that are exercised thereby." Blessed, therefore, are they that thus mourn, if they "tarry the Lord's leisure," and suffer not themselves to be turned out of the way, by the miserable comforters of the world; if they resolutely reject all the comforts of sin, of folly, and vanity; all the idle diversions and amusements of the world; all the pleasures which "perish in the using," and which

only tend to benumb and stupify the soul, that it may neither be sensible of itself nor God. Blessed are they who "follow on to know the Lord," and steadily refuse all other comfort. They shall be comforted by the consolations of his Spirit; by a fresh manifestation of his love; by such a witness of his accepting them in the Beloved, as shall never more be taken away from them. This "full assurance of faith" swallows up all doubt, as well as all tormenting fear; God now giving them a sure hope of an enduring substance, and "strong consolation through grace." Without disputing whether it be possible for any of those to "fall away, who were once enlightened and made partakers of the Holy Ghost," it suffices them to say, by the power now resting upon them, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. viii 35-39.)

5. This whole process, both of mourning for an absent God, and recovering the joy of his countenance, seems to be shadowed out in what our Lord spoke to his apostles, the night before his passion: "Do ye inquire of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament;" namely, when ye do not see me; "but the world shall rejoice;" shall triumph over you, as though your hope were now come to an end. "And ye shall be sorrowful," through doubt, through fear, through temptation, through vehement desire; "but your sorrow shall be turned into joy," by the return of Him whom your soul loveth. "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now have sorrow;" ye mourn and cannot be comforted: "but I will see you again; and your heart shall rejoice,"

with calm, inward joy, "and your joy no man taketh from you." (John xvi. 19-22.)

6. But although this mourning is at an end, is lost in holy joy, by the return of the Comforter, yet is there another, and a blessed mourning it is, which abides in the children of God. They still mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind: they "weep with them that weep." They weep for them that weep not for themselves, for the sinners against their own souls. They mourn for the weakness and unfaithfulness of those that are, in some measure, saved from their sins. "Who is weak, and they are not weak? Who is offended, and they burn not?" They are grieved for the dishonour continually done to the Majesty of heaven and earth. At all times they have an awful sense of this, which brings a deep seriousness upon their spirit; a seriousness which is not a little increased, since the eyes of their understanding were opened, by their continually seeing the vast ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore, which has already swallowed up millions of millions of men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain. They see here the house of God eternal in the heavens; there, hell and destruction without a covering; and thence feel the importance of every moment, which just appears, and is gone for ever!

7. But all this wisdom of God is foolishness with the world. The whole affair of mourning and poverty of spirit is with them stupidity and dulness. Nay, it is well if they pass so favourable a judgment upon it; if they do not vote it to be mere moping and melancholy, if not downright lunacy and distraction. And it is no wonder at all, that this judgment should be passed by those who know not God. Suppose, as two persons were walking together, one should suddenly stop, and, with the strongest signs of fear and amazement, cry out, "On what a precipice do we stand! See, we are on the point of being dashed in pieces! Another step, and we fall into that huge abyss! Stop! I will not go on for all the world!"—when the other, who seemed,

to himself at least, equally sharp-sighted, looked forward and saw nothing of all this; what would he think of his companion, but that he was beside himself; that his head was out of order; that much religion (if he was not guilty of "much learning") had certainly made him mad!

8. But let not the children of God, "the mourners in Sion," be moved by any of these things. Ye, whose eyes are enlightened, be not troubled by those who walk on still in darkness. Ye do not walk on in a vain shadow: God and eternity are real things. Heaven and hell are in very deed open before you; and ye are on the edge of the great gulf. It has already swallowed up more than words can express, nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues; and still yawns to devour, whether they see it or no, the giddy, miserable children of men. Oh, cry aloud! Spare not! Lift up your voice to Him who grasps both time and eternity, both for yourselves and your brethren, that ye may be counted worthy to escape the destruction that cometh as a whirlwind! that ye may be brought safe through all the waves and storms, into the haven where you would be! Weep for yourselves, till he wipes away the tears from your eyes. And even then, weep for the miseries that come upon the earth, till the Lord of all shall put a period to misery and sin, shall wipe away the tears from all faces, and "the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

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*QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXI.*

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Ques. 1. (¶ 1.) What natural consequence of our Lord's teachings and miracles is mentioned?

Ques. 2. (¶ 2.) To whom was the sermon preached by our Lord?

Ques. 3. (¶ 3.) What is the subject?

Ques. 4. (¶ 4.) For whom was this sermon designed?

Ques. 5. (¶ 5.) What do all men allow?

Ques. 6. (¶ 6.) Is there any restriction to be made?

Ques. 7. (¶ 7.) What is said of our Lord's manner?

Ques. 8. (¶ 8.) Of the spirit of the Preacher?

Ques. 9. (¶ 9.) Of his tone of authority?

Ques. 10. (¶ 10.) How has the sermon been divided?

Ques. 11. (I. 1.) What is first laid down?

Ques. 12. (I. 2.) What is the foundation of all?

Ques. 13. (I. 3.) Does the phrase "poor in spirit" mean those who love poverty?

Ques. 14. (I. 4.) Who, then, are the poor in spirit?

Ques. 15. (I. 5.) What is said of his guilt?

Ques. 16. (I. 6.) Can he make any atonement?

Ques. 17. (I. 7.) What does poverty of spirit imply?

Ques. 18. (I. 8.) Does the great apostle speak in the same way?

Ques. 19. (I. 9.) What does one observe here?

Ques. 20. (I. 10.) What exhortation is here given?

Ques. 21. (I. 11.) What is "the kingdom of heaven"?

Ques. 22. (I. 12.) Who have a right to it?

Ques. 23. (I. 13.) What is genuine humility?

Ques. 24. (II. 1.) Who has no conception of this?

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Ques. 25. (II. 2.) Is this promise to those who mourn on any worldly account?

Ques. 26. (II. 3.) What is said of the mourners of whom our Lord speaks?

Ques. 27. (II. 4.) What is said of present affliction?

Ques. 28. (II. 5.) What is shadowed out in our Lord's words to the apostles the night before his crucifixion?

Ques. 29. (II. 6.) What is the blessed mourning?

Ques. 30. (II. 7.) What is all this to the world?

Ques. 31. (II. 8.) What encouragement is here given?

SERMON XXII.  
ANALYSIS.

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I. THE spring-time of the soul. The winter is past, and he that comforteth the mourners is come. In the brightness of his presence the clouds disperse.

II. The meek. Not those who grieve at nothing; not those who are sheltered from the shocks of life by stupid insensibility. Nor does meekness imply being without zeal for God. Keeping clear of every extreme, it holds an even scale with regard to anger, sorrow, and fear. It relates to ourselves, and may be referred to either God or our neighbor. It is sometimes resignation and sometimes patience or contentment. Mildness to the good, gentleness to the evil. The meek clearly discern what is evil, and suffer it. Abiding, increasing, it restrains the outward act and the inward feeling. Anger and its consequences. When allowed. Never toward our brother. Exhortation to meekness. Their reward who possess it.

III. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The word defined. All holy and heavenly tempers in one. Hunger and thirst the strongest of all bodily appetites. So also the hunger and thirst of the soul are the strongest of all our spiritual appetites. These appetites of the soul must be gratified when once awakened. This satisfaction can never be found in what the world calls religion. These appetites can only be satisfied with the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. The blessedness of this hungering; it has the certain promise of satisfaction. The desire of the heart shall be granted: "They shall be filled."

IV. The merciful. Tenderness for others follows in those who are filled with the life of God. This concern for others shall have its reward. The word used by our Lord implies the compassionate, the tender-hearted. The word "merciful" is used as a synonym for those who love their neighbors as themselves. Importance of this love; without it we are nothing. Charity, or love—as the word literally ought to be translated—described. It suffers long, and is kind. It envieth not. Vaunteth not itself. Is not puffed up. Does not behave unseemly. Seeks not her own. Is not provoked. "Easily" not in the Greek text. St. Paul's words are absolute. Why the word "easily" was inserted. Love thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth; covereth all things; believeth all things; hopeth all things; endureth all things. The complete character of him that is merciful.

V. The application.

## SERMON XXII.

## UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

## DISCOURSE II.

- 'Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*  
*"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:  
 for they shall be filled.*  
*"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."—MATT.  
 v. 5-7.*

I. 1. WHEN "the winter is past," when "the time of singing is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in the land;" when He that comforts the mourners is now returned, "that he may abide with them for ever;" when, at the brightness of his presence, the clouds disperse, the dark clouds of doubt and uncertainty, the storms of fear flee away, the waves of sorrow subside, and their spirit again rejoiceth in God their Saviour; then is it that this word is eminently fulfilled; then those whom he hath comforted can bear witness, "Blessed," or happy, "are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth."

2. But who are "the meek?" Not those who grieve at nothing, because they know nothing; who are not discomposed at the evils that occur, because they discern not evil from good. Not those who are sheltered from the shocks of life, from a stupid insensibility; who have, either by nature or art, the virtue of stocks and stones, and resent nothing, because they feel nothing. Brute philosophers are wholly unconcerned in this matter. Apathy is as far from meekness as from hu-

manity. So that one would not easily conceive how any Christians of the purer ages, especially any of the Fathers of the Church, could confound these, and mistake one of the foulest errors of heathenism for a branch of true Christianity.

3. Nor does Christian meekness imply, the being without zeal for God, any more than it does ignorance or insensibility. No; it keeps clear of every extreme, whether in excess or defect. It does not destroy, but balance the affections, which the God of nature never designed should be rooted out by grace, but only brought and kept under due regulations. It poises the mind aright. It holds an even scale, with regard to anger, and sorrow, and fear; preserving the mean in every circumstance of life, and not declining either to the right hand or the left.

4. Meekness, therefore, seems properly to relate to ourselves: but it may be referred either to God or our neighbour. When this due composure of mind has reference to God, it is usually termed "resignation;" a calm acquiescence in whatsoever is his will concerning us, even though it may not be pleasing to nature; saying continually, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." When we consider it more strictly with regard to ourselves, we style it "patience" or "contentedness." When it is exerted toward other men, then it is "mildness" to the good, and "gentleness" to the evil.

5. They who are truly meek can clearly discern what is evil; and they can also suffer it. They are sensible of every thing of this kind, but still meekness holds the reins. They are exceeding "zealous for the Lord of hosts;" but their zeal is always guided by knowledge, and tempered, in every thought, and word, and work, with the love of man, as well as the love of God. They do not desire to extinguish any of the passions which God has for wise ends implanted in their nature; but they have the mastery of all: they hold them all in subjection, and employ them only in subservience to those

ends. And thus even the harsher and more displeasing passions are applicable to the noblest purposes; even hatred, and anger, and fear, when engaged against sin, and regulated by faith and love, are as walls and bulwarks to the soul, so that the wicked one cannot approach to hurt it.

6. It is evident, this divine temper is not only to abide, but to increase in us day by day. Occasions of exercising, and thereby increasing it, will never be wanting, while we remain upon earth. "We have need of patience, that after we have done" and suffered "the will of God, we may receive the promise." We have need of resignation, that we may in all circumstances say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." And we have need of "gentleness toward all men;" but especially toward the evil and unthankful: otherwise we shall be overcome of evil, instead of overcoming evil with good.

7. Nor does meekness restrain only the outward act, as the scribes and Pharisees taught of old, and the miserable teachers who are not taught of God will not fail to do in all ages. Our Lord guards against this, and shows the true extent of it, in the following words: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:" (Matt. v. 21, &c. :) "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire."

8. Our Lord here ranks under the head of murder, even that anger which goes no farther than the heart; which does not show itself by any outward unkindness, no, not so much as a passionate word. "Whosoever is angry with his brother," with any man living, seeing we are all brethren; whosoever feels any unkindness in his heart, any temper contrary to love; whosoever is angry "without a cause," without a sufficient cause, or farther than that cause requires, "shall be in danger of the

judgment;" ενοχος εσται; shall, in that moment, be obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God.

But would not one be inclined to prefer the reading of those copies which omit the word εαη, without a cause? Is it not entirely superfluous? For if anger at persons be a temper contrary to love, how can there be a cause, a sufficient cause, for it,—any that will justify it in the sight of God?

Anger at sin we allow. In this sense we may be angry, and yet we sin not. In this sense our Lord himself is once recorded to have been angry: "He looked round about upon them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." He was grieved at the sinners, and angry at the sin. And this is undoubtedly right before God.

9. "And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca;" —whosoever shall give way to anger, so as to utter any contemptuous word. It is observed by commentators, that Raca is a Syriac word, which properly signifies, empty, vain, foolish; so that it is as inoffensive an expression as can well be used, toward one at whom we are displeased. And yet, whosoever shall use this, as our Lord assures us, "shall be in danger of the council;" rather, shall be obnoxious thereto: he shall be liable to a severer sentence from the Judge of all the earth.

"But whosoever shall say, Thou fool;" —whosoever shall so give place to the devil, as to break out into reviling, into designedly reproachful and contumelious language, "shall be obnoxious to hell-fire;" shall, in that instant, be liable to the highest condemnation. It should be observed, that our Lord describes all these as obnoxious to capital punishment. The first, to strangling, usually inflicted on those who were condemned in one of the inferior courts; the second to stoning, which was frequently inflicted on those who were condemned by the great council at Jerusalem; the third, to burning alive, inflicted only on the highest offenders, in the "valley of the sons of Hinnom;" Γη Εβωω, from

which that word is evidently taken which we translate "hell."

10. And whereas men naturally imagine, that God will excuse their defect in some duties, for their exactness in others; our Lord next takes care to cut off that vain though common imagination. He shows that it is impossible for any sinner to *commute* with God; who will not accept one duty for another, nor take a part of obedience for the whole. He warns us, that the performing our duty to God will not excuse us from our duty to our neighbour; that works of piety, as they are called, will be so far from commending us to God, if we are wanting in charity, that, on the contrary, that want of charity will make all those works an abomination to the Lord.

"Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee,"—on account of thy unkind behaviour toward him, of thy calling him "Raca," or, "Thou fool;" think not that thy gift will atone for thy anger; or that it will find any acceptance with God so long as thy conscience is defiled with the guilt of unrepented sin. "Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother," (at least do all that in thee lies toward being reconciled,) "and then come and offer thy gift." (Matt. v. 23, 24.)

11. And let there be no delay in what so nearly concerneth thy soul. "Agree with thine adversary quickly;"—now; upon the spot; "whiles thou art in the way with him;" if it be possible, before he go out of thy sight; "lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge;" lest he appeal to God the Judge of all; "and the judge deliver thee to the officer," to Satan, the executioner of the wrath of God; "and thou be cast into prison," into hell, there to be reserved to the judgment of the great day. "Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." But this it is impossible for thee ever to do; seeing thou hast nothing

to pay. Therefore, if thou art once in that prison, the smoke of thy torment must "ascend up for ever and ever."

12. Meantime, "the meek shall inherit the earth" Such is the foolishness of worldly wisdom! The wise of the world had warned them again and again,—that if they did not resent such treatment, if they would tamely suffer themselves to be thus abused, there would be no living for them upon earth; that they would never be able to procure the common necessaries of life, nor to keep even what they had; that they could expect no peace, no quiet possession, no enjoyment of any thing. Most true,—suppose there were no God in the world; or suppose he did not concern himself with the children of men: but, "when God ariseth to judgment, and to help all the meek upon earth," how doth he laugh all this heathen wisdom to scorn, and turn the "fierceness of man to his praise!" He takes a peculiar care to provide them with all things needful for life and godliness; he secures to them the provision he hath made, in spite of the force, fraud, or malice of men; and what he secures he gives them richly to enjoy. It is sweet to them, be it little or much. As in patience they possess their souls, so they truly possess whatever God hath given them. They are always content, always pleased with what they have: it pleases them because it pleases God: so that while their heart, their desire, their joy is in heaven, they may truly be said to "inherit the earth."

13. But there seems to be a yet further meaning in these words, even that they shall have a more eminent part in "the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" in that inheritance, a general description of which (and the particulars we shall know hereafter) St. John hath given in the twentieth chapter of the Revelation: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven,—and he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent,—and bound him a thousand years.—And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word

of God, and of them which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands: and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again, until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

II. 1. Our Lord has hitherto been more immediately employed in removing the hinderances of true religion: such is pride, the first grand hinderance of all religion, which is taken away by poverty of spirit; levity and thoughtlessness, which prevent any religion from taking root in the soul, till they are removed by holy mourning: such are anger, impatience, discontent, which are all healed by Christian meekness. And when once these hinderances are removed, these evil diseases of the soul, which were continually raising false cravings therein, and filling it with sickly appetites, the native appetite of a heaven-born spirit returns; it hungers and thirsts after righteousness: and "blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."

2. Righteousness, as was observed before, is the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is every holy and heavenly temper in one; springing from, as well as terminating in, the love of God, as our Father and Redeemer and the love of all men for his sake.

3. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after" this: in order fully to understand which expression, we should observe, first, that hunger and thirst are the strongest of all our bodily appetites. In like manner, this hunger in the soul, this thirst after the image of God, is the strongest of all our spiritual appetites, when it is once awakened in the heart; yea, it swallows up all the rest in that one great desire,—to be renewed after the likeness of Him that created us. We should,

secondly, observe, that from the time we begin to hunger and thirst, those appetites do not cease, but are more and more craving and importunate, till we either eat and drink, or die. And even so, from the time that we begin to hunger and thirst after the whole mind which was in Christ, these spiritual appetites do not cease, but cry after their food with more and more importunity; nor can they possibly cease, before they are satisfied, while there is any spiritual life remaining. We may, thirdly, observe, that hunger and thirst are satisfied with nothing but meat and drink. If you would give to him that is hungry all the world beside, all the elegance of apparel, all the trappings of state, all the treasure upon earth, yea, thousands of gold and silver; if you would pay him ever so much honour;—he regards it not: all these things are then of no account with him. He would still say, "These are not the things I want: give me food, or else I die." The very same is the case with every soul that truly hungers and thirsts after righteousness. He can find no comfort in any thing but this: he can be satisfied with nothing else. Whatever you offer besides, it is lightly esteemed: whether it be riches, or honour, or pleasure, he still says, "This is not the thing which I want! Give me love, or else I die!"

4. And it is as impossible to satisfy such a soul, a soul that is athirst for God, the living God, with what the world accounts religion, as with what they account happiness. The religion of the world implies three things: (1.) The doing no harm, the abstaining from outward sin; at least from such as is scandalous, as robbery, theft, common swearing, drunkenness: (2.) The doing good, the relieving the poor; the being charitable, as it is called: (3.) The using the means of grace; at least the going to church and to the Lord's supper. He in whom these three marks are found is termed by the world "a religious man." But will this satisfy him who hungers after God? No: it is not food for his soul. He wants a religion of a nobler kind, a

religion higher and deeper than this. He can no more feed on this poor, shallow, formal thing, than he can "fill his belly with the east wind." True, he is careful to abstain from the very appearance of evil; he is zealous of good works; he attends all the ordinances of God: but all this is not what he longs for. This is only the outside of that religion which he insatiably hungers after. The knowledge of God in Christ Jesus; "the life which is hid with Christ in God;" the being "joined unto the Lord in one spirit;" the having "fellowship with the Father and the Son;" the "walking in the light as God is in the light;" the being "purified even as he is pure;"—this is the religion, the righteousness he thirsts after; nor can he rest, till he thus rests in God.

5. "Blessed are they who" thus "hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." They shall be filled with the things which they long for; even with righteousness and true holiness. God shall satisfy them with the blessings of his goodness, with the felicity of his chosen. He shall feed them with the bread of heaven, with the manna of his love. He shall give them to drink of his pleasures as out of the river, which he that drinketh of shall never thirst, only for more and more of the water of life. This thirst shall endure for ever.

"The painful thirst, the fond desire,  
Thy joyous presence shall remove:  
But my full soul shall still require  
A whole eternity of love."

6. Whosoever then thou art, to whom God hath given to "hunger and thirst after righteousness," cry unto him that thou mayest never lose that inestimable gift,—that this divine appetite may never cease. If many rebuke thee, and bid thee hold thy peace, regard them not; yea, cry so much the more, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on me!" "Let me not live, but to be holy as thou art holy!" No more "spend thy money for that which is not bread, nor thy labour for that which

satisfieth not." Canst thou hope to dig happiness out of the earth,—to find it in the things of the world? Oh, trample under foot all its pleasures, despise its honours, count its riches as dung and dross,—yea, and all the things which are beneath the sun,—“for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus,” for the entire renewal of thy soul in that image of God wherein it was originally created. Beware of quenching that blessed hunger and thirst by what the world calls “religion;” a religion of form, of outside show, which leaves the heart as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the power of godliness, but a religion that is spirit and life; thy dwelling in God, and God in thee,—the being an inhabitant of eternity; the entering in by the blood of sprinkling “within the veil,” and sitting “in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.”

III. 1. And the more they are filled with the life of God, the more tenderly will they be concerned for those who are still without God in the world, still dead in trespasses and sins. Nor shall this concern for others lose its reward. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.”

The word used by our Lord more immediately implies the compassionate, the tender-hearted; those who, far from despising, earnestly grieve for, those that do not hunger after God.

This eminent part of brotherly love is here, by a common figure, put for the whole; so that “the merciful,” in the full sense of the term, are they who love their neighbours as themselves.

2. Because of the vast importance of this love,—without which, “though we spake with the tongues of men and angels, though we had the gift of prophecy, and understood all mysteries, and all knowledge; though we had all faith so as to remove mountains; yea, though we gave all our goods to feed the poor, and our very bodies to be burned, it would profit us nothing,”—the wisdom of God has given us, by the apostle Paul, a full and particular account of it; by considering which we

shall most clearly discern who are the merciful that shall obtain mercy.

3. "Charity," or love, (as it were to be wished it had been rendered throughout, being a far plainer and less ambiguous word,) the love of our neighbour as Christ hath loved us, "suffereth long;" is patient toward all men: it suffers all the weakness, ignorance, errors, infirmities, all the frowardness and littleness of faith, of the children of God; all the malice and wickedness of the children of the world. And it suffers all this, not only for a time, for a short season, but to the end; still feeding our enemy when he hungers; if he thirst, still giving him drink; thus continually "heaping coals of fire," of melting love, "upon his head."

4. And in every step toward this desirable end, the "overcoming evil with good," "love is kind:" (*χρηστεύεται*, a word not easily translated:) it is *soft, mild, benign*. It stands at the utmost distance from moroseness, from all harshness or sourness of spirit; and inspires the sufferer at once with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection.

5. Consequently, "love envieth not:" it is impossible it should; it is directly opposite to that baneful temper. It cannot be, that he who has this tender affection to all, who earnestly wishes all temporal and spiritual blessings, all good things in this world and the world to come, to every soul that God hath made, should be pained at his bestowing any good gift on any child of man. If he has himself received the same, he does not grieve, but rejoice that another partakes of the common benefit. If he has not, he blesses God that his brother at least has, and is herein happier than himself. And the greater his love, the more does he rejoice in the blessings of all mankind; the farther is he removed from every kind and degree of envy toward any creature.

6. Love *οὐ κερπέρευεται*,—not "vaunteth not itself;" which coincides with the very next words; but rather, (as the word likewise properly imports,) *is not rash or hasty* in judging: it will not hastily condemn any one

It does not pass a severe sentence, on a slight or sudden view of things: it first weighs all the evidence, particularly that which is brought in favour of the accused. A true lover of his neighbour is not like the generality of men, who, even in cases of the nicest nature, "see a little, presume a great deal, and so jump to the conclusion." No: he proceeds with wariness and circumspection, taking heed to every step; willingly subscribing to that rule of the ancient heathen, (oh, where will the modern Christian appear!) "I am so far from lightly believing what one man says against another, that I will not easily believe what a man says against himself. I will always allow him second thoughts, and many times counsel too."

7. It follows, "love is not puffed up;" it does not incline or suffer any man "to think more highly of himself than he ought to think;" but rather to think soberly: yea, it humbles the soul unto the dust. It destroys all high conceits, engendering pride; and makes us rejoice to be as nothing, to be little and vile, the lowest of all, the servant of all. They who are "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" cannot but "in honour prefer one another." Those who, having the same love, are of one accord, do in lowliness of mind "each esteem other better than themselves."

8. "It doth not behave itself unseemly;" it is not rude, or willingly offensive, to any. It "renders to all their due; fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour;" courtesy, civility, humanity to all the world; in their several degrees, "honouring all men." A late writer defines good breeding, nay, the highest degree of it, politeness, "A continual desire to please, appearing in all the behaviour." But if so, there is none so well-bred as a Christian, a lover of all mankind. For he cannot but desire to "please all men for their good to edification:" and this desire cannot be hid; it will necessarily appear in all his intercourse with men. For his "love is without dissimulation:" it will appear in all his actions and conversation; yea, and will constrain

him, though without guile, "to become all things to all men, if by any means he may save some."

9. And in becoming all things to all men, "love seeketh not her own." In striving to please all men, the lover of mankind has no eye at all to his own temporal advantage. He covets no man's silver, or gold, or apparel: he desires nothing but the salvation of their souls: yea, in some sense, he may be said, *not to see his own* spiritual, any more than temporal, advantage; for while he is on the full stretch to save their souls from death, he, as it were, forgets himself. He does not think of himself, so long as that zeal for the glory of God swallows him up. Nay, at some times he may almost seem, through an excess of love, to give up himself, both his soul and his body; while he cries out, with Moses, "Oh, this people have sinned a great sin; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin;—and if not, blot me out of the book which thou hast written;" (Ex. xxxii. 31, 32);—or, with St. Paul, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." (Rom. ix. 3.)

10. No marvel that such "love is not provoked:" *ου παροξυνεται*. Let it be observed, the word *easily*, strangely inserted in the translation, is not in the original. St. Paul's words are absolute: "Love is not provoked;" it is not provoked to unkindness toward any one. Occasions indeed will frequently occur; outward provocations of various kinds; but love does not yield to provocation; it triumphs over all. In all trials it looketh unto Jesus, and is more than conqueror in his love.

It is not improbable that our translators inserted that word, as it were, to *excuse* the apostle; who, as they supposed, might otherwise appear to be wanting in the very love which he so beautifully describes. They seem to have supposed this from a phrase in the Acts of the Apostles, which is likewise very inaccurately translated. When Paul and Barnabas disagreed concerning John, the translation runs thus, "And the com

attention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder." (Acts xv. 39.) This naturally induces the reader to suppose that they were equally sharp therein; that St. Paul, who was undoubtedly right, with regard to the point in question, (it being quite improper to take John with them again, who had deserted them before,) was as much provoked as Barnabas, who gave such a proof of his anger, as to leave the work for which he had been set apart by the Holy Ghost. But the original imports no such thing; nor does it affirm that St. Paul was provoked at all. It simply says, *Εγενετο ουν παροξυσμος*,—"And there was a sharpness," a *paroxysm* of anger; in consequence of which Barnabas left St. Paul, took John, and went his own way. Paul then "chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren to the grace of God;" (which is not said concerning Barnabas :) "and he went through Syria and Cilicia," as he had proposed, "confirming the churches." But to return.

11. Love prevents a thousand provocations which would otherwise arise, because it "thinketh no evil." Indeed the merciful man cannot avoid knowing many things that are evil; he cannot but see them with his own eyes, and hear them with his own ears. For love does not put out his eyes, so that it is impossible for him not to see that such things are done; neither does it take away his understanding any more than his senses, so that he cannot but know that they are evil. For instance: when he sees a man strike his neighbour, or hears him blaspheme God, he cannot either question the thing done, or the words spoken, or doubt of their being evil: yet, *ου λογιζεται το κακον*. The word *λογιζεται*, "thinketh," does not refer either to our seeing and hearing, or to the first and involuntary acts of our understanding; but to our *willingly thinking* what we need not; our *inferring* evil, where it does not appear; to our *reasoning* concerning things which we do not see; our *supposing* what we have neither seen nor heard. This is what true love absolutely destroys. It

tears up, root and branch, all *imagining* what we have not known. It casts out all jealousies, all evil surmisings, all readiness to believe evil. It is frank, open, unsuspecting; and, as it cannot design, so neither does it fear, evil.

12. It "rejoiceth not in iniquity;" common as this is, even among those who bear the name of Christ, who scruple not to rejoice over their enemy, when he falleth either into affliction, or error, or sin. Indeed, how hardly can they avoid this, who are zealously attached to any party! How difficult is it for them not to be pleased with any fault which they discover in those of the opposite party,—with any real or supposed blemish, either in their principles or practice! What warm defender of any cause is clear of these? Yea, who is so calm as to be altogether free? Who does not rejoice when his adversary makes a false step, which he thinks will advantage his own cause? Only a man of love. He alone weeps over either the sin or folly of his enemy, takes no pleasure in hearing or in repeating it, but rather desires that it may be forgotten for ever.

13. But he "rejoiceth in the truth," wheresoever it is found; in "the truth which is after godliness:" bringing forth its proper fruit, holiness of heart, and holiness of conversation. He rejoices to find that even those who oppose him, whether with regard to opinions, or some points of practice, are nevertheless lovers of God, and in other respects unreprouable. He is glad to hear good of them, and to speak all he can consistently with truth and justice. Indeed, good in general is his glory and joy wherever diffused throughout the race of mankind. As a citizen of the world, he claims a share in the happiness of all the inhabitants of it. Because he is a man, he is not unconcerned in the welfare of any man; but enjoys whatsoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good-will among men.

14. This "love covereth all things:" (so, without all doubt, *παντα σκεπει* should be translated; for otherwise it would be the very same with *παντα υπομειναι*, "en

dureth all things :") because the merciful man rejoiceth not in iniquity, neither does he willingly make mention of it. Whatever evil he sees, hears or knows, he nevertheless conceals, so far as he can without making himself "partaker of other men's sins." Wheresoever or with whomsoever he is, if he sees any thing which he approves not, it goes not out of his lips, unless to the person concerned, if haply he may gain his brother. So far is he from making the faults or failings of others the matter of his conversation, that of the absent he never does speak at all, unless he can speak well. A tale-bearer, a backbiter, a whisperer, an evil-speaker, is to him all one as a murderer. He would just as soon cut his neighbour's throat, as thus murder his reputation. Just as soon would he think of diverting himself by setting fire to his neighbour's house, as of thus "scattering abroad arrows, firebrands, and death," and saying, "Am I not in sport?"

He makes one only exception. Sometimes he is convinced that it is for the glory of God, or (which comes to the same) the good of his neighbour, that an evil should not be covered. In this case, for the benefit of the innocent, he is constrained to declare the guilty. But even here, (1.) He will not speak at all, till love, superior love, constrains him. (2.) He cannot do it from a general confused view of doing good, or promoting the glory of God, but from a clear sight of some particular end, some determinate good, which he pursues. (3.) Still he cannot speak, unless he be fully convinced that this very means is necessary to that end; that the end cannot be answered, at least not so effectually, by any other way. (4.) He then doeth it with the utmost sorrow and reluctance; using it as the last and worst medicine, a desperate remedy in a desperate case, a kind of poison never to be used but to expel poison. Consequently, (5.) He uses it as sparingly as possible. And this he does with fear and trembling, lest he should transgress the law of love by speaking too much, more than he would have done by not speaking at all.

15. Love "believeth all things." It is always willing to think the best; to put the most favourable construction on every thing. It is ever ready to believe whatever may tend to the advantage of any one's character. It is easily convinced of (what it earnestly desires) the innocence or integrity of any man; or, at least, of the sincerity of his repentance, if he had once erred from the way. It is glad to excuse whatever is amiss; to condemn the offender as little as possible and to make all the allowance for human weakness which can be done without betraying the truth of God.

16. And when it can no longer believe, then love "hopeth all things." Is any evil related of any man? Love hopes that the relation is not true, that the thing related was never done. Is it certain it was?—"But perhaps it was not done with such circumstances as are related; so that, allowing the fact, there is room to hope it was not so ill as it is represented." Was the action apparently undeniably evil? Love hopes the intention was not so. Is it clear the design was evil too?—"Yet might it not spring from the settled temper of the heart but from a start of passion, or from some vehement temptation, which hurried the man beyond himself." And even when it cannot be doubted, but all the actions, designs, and tempers are equally evil, still love hopes that God will at last make bare his arm, and get himself the victory; and that there shall be "joy in heaven over" this "one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance."

17. Lastly. It "endureth all things." This completes the character of him that is truly merciful. He endureth not some, not many, things only; not most, but absolutely *all things*. Whatever the injustice, the malice, the cruelty of men can inflict, he is able to suffer. He calls nothing intolerable; he never says of any thing, "This is not to be borne." No; he can not only do, but suffer, all things through Christ which strengtheneth him. And all he suffers does not destroy his love, nor impair it in the least. It is proof against

all. It is a flame that burns even in the midst of the great deep. "Many waters cannot quench" his "love, neither can the floods drown it." It triumphs over all It "never faileth," either in time or in eternity.

"In obedience to what Heaven decrees,  
 Knowledge shall fail, and prophecy shall cease;  
 But lasting charity's more ample sway,  
 Nor bound by time, nor subject to decay,  
 In happy triumph shall for ever live,  
 And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive."

So shall "the merciful obtain mercy;" not only by the blessing of God upon all their ways, by his now repaying the love they bear to their brethren a thousand-fold into their own bosom; but likewise by "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory," in the "kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world."

18. For a little while you may say, "Wo is me, that I' am constrained to "dwell with Mesech, and to have my habitation among the tents of Kedar!" You may pour out your soul, and bemoan the loss of true, genuine love in the earth: lost indeed! You may well say, (but not in the ancient sense,) "See how *these Christians* love one another!" these Christian kingdoms, that are tearing out each other's bowels, desolating one another with fire and sword! these Christian armies, that are sending each other by thousands by ten thousands, quick into hell! these Christian nations, that are all on fire with intestine broils, party against party, faction against faction! these Christian cities, where deceit and fraud, oppression and wrong, yea robbery and murder, go not out of their streets! these Christian families, torn asunder with envy, jealousy, anger, domestic jars without number, without end! yea what is most dreadful, most to be lamented of all, ~~these~~ Christian churches!—churches ("tell it not in Gath"—but, alas! how can we hide it, either from Jews, Turks, or pagans?) that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace, and wage continual war with each other! that convert sinners by burning them alive! that are "trunk

with the blood of the saints!"—Does this praise belong only to "Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth?" Nay, verily; but Reformed churches (so called) have fairly learned to tread in her steps. Protestant churches, too, know to persecute, when they have power in their hands, even unto blood. And, meanwhile, how do they also anathematize each other! devote each other to the nethermost hell! What wrath, what contention, what malice, what bitterness, is everywhere found among them, even where they agree in essentials, and only differ in opinions, or in the circumstances of religion! Who follows after *only* the "things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another?" O God! how long? Shall thy promise fail? Fear it not, ye little flock! Against hope, believe in hope! It is your Father's good pleasure yet to renew the face of the earth. Surely all these things shall come to an end, and the inhabitants of the earth shall learn righteousness. "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they know war any more." "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains;" and "all the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God." "They shall not" then "hurt or destroy in all his holy mountain;" but they shall call their "walls salvation, and their gates praise." They shall all be without spot or blemish, loving one another, even as Christ hath loved us.—Be thou part of the first-fruits, if the harvest is not yet. Do thou love thy neighbour as thyself. The Lord God fill thy heart with such a love to every soul, that thou mayest be ready to lay down thy life for his sake! May thy soul continually overflow with love, swallowing up every unkind and unholy temper, till he calleth thee up into the region of love, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

## **. QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXII.**

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Ques. 1. (I. 1.) From what book are these quotations made?

Ques. 2. (I. 2.) Who are the meek?

Ques. 3. (I. 3.) What is not implied in Christian meekness?

Ques. 4. (I. 4.) To whom does it relate?

Ques. 5. (I. 5.) What is said of the discernment of the truly meek?

Ques. 6. (I. 6.) What is said of this divine temper?

Ques. 7. (I. 7.) Does it restrain only the outward act?

Ques. 8. (I. 8.) What is here ranked under the head of murder?

Ques. 9. (I. 9.) What is here said of giving way to anger? What does the word "Raca" mean?

Ques. 10. (I. 10.) What do men naturally imagine?

Ques. 11. (I. 11.) What direction is given for reconciling those who are at enmity?

Ques. 12. (I. 12.) Does the wisdom of the world recommend this course?

Ques. 13. (I. 13.) What further meaning is conveyed?

Ques. 14. (II. 1.) What is here said of our Lord's teaching hitherto?

Ques. 15. (II. 2.) What is meant by righteousness?

Ques. 16. (II. 3.) What is said of hunger and thirst after this?

Ques. 17. (II. 4.) Can the soul be satisfied with what the world calls religion?

Ques. 18. (II. 5.) What is the promise here made?

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Ques. 19. (II. 6.) What is the exhortation in this paragraph?

Ques. 20. (III. 1.) What is said of those who are filled with the life of God?

Ques. 21. (III. 2.) What are we without this love?

Ques. 22. (III. 3.) What characteristics of charity, or love, are here given?

Ques. 23. (III. 4.) What is further said of it?

Ques. 24. (III. 5.) What is said of it with regard to envy?

Ques. 25. (III. 6.) What of vaunting itself?

Ques. 26. (III. 7.) Is there any room for pride?

Ques. 27. (III. 8.) What of its behavior?

Ques. 28. (III. 9.) How does it seek to become all things to all men?

Ques. 29. (III. 10.) Is it ever provoked? What is said of the word "easily?"

Ques. 30. (III. 11.) What does love prevent?

Ques. 31. (III. 12, 13.) In what does it rejoice?

Ques. 32. (III. 14.) What does it cover?

Ques. 33. (III. 15.) What does it believe?

Ques. 34. (III. 16, 17.) What does it hope and endure?

Ques. 35. (III. 18.) How does the sermon conclude?

## SERMON XXIII.

### ANALYSIS.

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I. EXCELLENT things spoken of love to our neighbor. Fulfilling the law the end of the commandment. This love is only valuable when it springs from the love of God; therefore, we are to examine ourselves closely. The pure in heart defined. Little regarded by false teachers in all ages. A remarkable instance. Nothing which is an occasion for impurity is admitted. Cutting off the right-hand, and the two steps to be taken before proceeding to this absolute and final separation. Marriage must not minister to loose desires. Polygamy clearly forbidden. The purity of heart which God requires. The pure in heart see God. Wherein they see him—in his providence, in his ordinances. All common swearing forbidden. Lawful oaths not forbidden. The great lesson inculcated.

II. What we are to do. The blessedness of the peace-makers. Meaning of the original word and its wide application. The full extent of the peace-maker's work. Doing good to all men, and to the uttermost of his power. Rejoicing in any good that he may be able to do to the souls of men. Although the power is of God, he may be the instrument in God's hand. Blessedness of those who are thus employed.

III. The character described is not to receive gracious treatment from the world. He will be persecuted and evil entreated. Who are these thus persecuted? The traits of character defined, and the question why they are persecuted answered. The next inquiry: Who are they that persecute?

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The reason given for this persecution. The spirit of the world is offended in them. The next inquiry, How will they persecute? is answered. Why God permitted persecution to rage in the early history of the Church. Reference to the persecution in England. Lighter kinds of persecution frequent. Some forms of it attend all the children of God. Some have supposed that before the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in all persecution shall cease. While this is probable, it happens even now that many sinful people do esteem and love those who are striving to live holy lives. Yet the offense of the cross has not ceased. The last inquiry concerns the behavior of the children of God under persecution. It is lawful to avoid it, but this cannot always be done. Rejoicing because of persecution for Christ's sake. Cautions against being turned out of the way. Conclusion.

## SERMON XXIII.

## UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

## DISCOURSE III.

- "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*  
*"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God:*  
*"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*  
*"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.*  
*"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—MATT. V. 8-12.*

I. 1. How excellent things are spoken of the love of our neighbour! It is the "fulfilling of the law," "the end of the commandment." Without this, all we have, all we do, all we suffer, is of no value in the sight of God. But it is that love of our neighbour which springs from the love of God: otherwise itself is nothing worth. It behoves us, therefore, to examine well upon what foundation our love of our neighbour stands; whether it is really built upon the love of God; whether we do "love him because he first loved us;" whether we are pure in heart: for this is the foundation which shall never be moved. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

2. "The pure in heart" are they whose hearts God hath "purified even as He is pure;" who are purified, through faith in the blood of Jesus, from every unholy affection; who, being "cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfect holiness in the" loving "fear of

God." They are, through the power of his grace, purified from pride, by the deepest poverty of spirit; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and gentleness; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, to know and love him more and more, by that hunger and thirst after righteousness which now engrosses their whole soul: so that now they love the Lord their God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and mind, and strength.

3. But how little has this purity of heart been regarded by the false teachers of all ages! They have taught men barely to abstain from such outward impurities as God hath forbidden by name; but they did not strike at the heart; and by not guarding against, they in effect countenanced, inward corruptions.

A remarkable instance of this, our Lord has given us in the following words: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery;" (verse 27;) and, in explaining this, those blind leaders of the blind only insisted on men's abstaining from the outward act. "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" (verse 28;) for God requireth truth in the inward parts: he searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, and if thou incline unto iniquity with thy heart, the Lord will not hear thee.

4. And God admits no excuse for retaining any thing which is an occasion of impurity. Therefore, "if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Verse 29.) If persons as dear to thee as thy right eye be an occasion of thy thus offending God, a means of exciting unholy desire in thy soul, delay not, forcibly separate from them. "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." (Verse 30.) If any who seem as, r.

ecessary to thee as thy right hand be an occasion of sin, of impure desire; even though it were never to go beyond the heart, never to break out in word or action; constrain thyself to an entire and final parting; cut them off at a stroke; give them up to God. Any loss whether of pleasure, or substance, or friends, is preferable to the loss of thy soul.

Two steps only it may not be improper to take before such an absolute and final separation. First, try whether the unclean spirit may not be driven out by fasting and prayer, and by carefully abstaining from every action, and word, and look which thou hast found to be an occasion of evil. Secondly, if thou art not by this means delivered, ask counsel of him that watcheth over thy soul, or, at least, of some who have experience in the ways of God, touching the time and manner of that separation; but confer not with flesh and blood, lest thou be "given up to a strong delusion to believe a lie."

5. Nor may marriage itself, holy and honourable as it is, be used as a pretence for giving a loose to our desires. Indeed, "it hath been said, Whosoever will put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:" and then all was well; though he alleged no cause, but that he did not like her, or liked another better. "But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication," (that is, adultery; the word *πορνεία* signifying unchastity in general, either in the married or unmarried state,) "cause her to commit adultery," if she marry again. "and whosoever shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery." (Verses 31, 32.)

All polygamy is clearly forbidden in these words, wherein our Lord expressly declares, that for any woman who has a husband alive, to marry again is adultery. By parity of reason, it is adultery for any man to marry again, so long as he has a wife alive; yea, although they were divorced; unless that divorce had been for the cause of adultery; in that only case there is no scripture which forbids to marry again.

6. Such is the purity of heart which God requires and works in those who believe on the Son of his love. And "blessed are" they who are thus "pure in heart: for they shall see God." He will "manifest himself unto them," not only "as he doth not unto the world," but as he doth not always to his own children. He will bless them with the clearest communications of his Spirit, the most intimate "fellowship with the Father and with the Son." He will cause his presence to go continually before them, and the light of his countenance to shine upon them. It is the ceaseless prayer of their heart, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory;" and they have the petition they ask of him. They now see Him by faith, (the veil of flesh being made, as it were, transparent,) even in these his lowest works, in all that surrounds them, in all that God has created and made. They see Him in the height above, and in the depth beneath; they see Him filling all in all. The pure in heart see all things full of God. They see him in the firmament of heaven, in the moon walking in brightness; in the sun, when he rejoiceth as a giant to run his course. They see Him "making the clouds his chariots, and walking upon the wings of the wind." They see Him "preparing rain for the earth, and blessing the increase of it; giving grass for the cattle, and green herb for the use of man." They see the Creator of all, wisely governing all, and "upholding all things by the word of his power." "O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world!"

7. In all his providences relating to themselves, to their souls or bodies, the pure in heart do more particularly see God. They see his hand ever over them for good; giving them all things in weight and measure, numbering the hairs of their head, making a hedge round about them and all that they have, and disposing all the circumstances of their life according to the depth both of his wisdom and mercy.

8. But in a more especial manner they see God in

his ordinances. Whether they appear in the great congregation, to "pay him the honour due unto his name," "and worship him in the beauty of holiness;" or "enter into their closets," and there pour out their souls before their "Father which is in secret;" whether they search the oracles of God, or hear the ambassadors of Christ proclaiming glad tidings of salvation; or, by eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, "show forth his death till he come" in the clouds of heaven;—in all these his appointed ways, they find such a near approach as cannot be expressed. They see him as it were, face to face, and "talk with him, as a man talketh with his friend;"—a fit preparation for those mansions above, wherein they shall see him as he is.

9. But how far were they from seeing God, who, having heard "that it had been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths," (verse 33,) interpret it thus, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, when thou swearest by the Lord Jehovah: thou "shalt perform unto the Lord" these "thine oaths;" but as to other oaths, he regardeth them not!

So the Pharisees taught. They not only allowed all manner of swearing in common conversation; but accounted even forswearing a little thing, so they had not sworn by the peculiar name of God.

But our Lord here absolutely forbids all common swearing, as well as all false swearing; and shows the heinousness of both, by the same awful consideration, that every creature is God's, and he is everywhere present, in all, and over all. "I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne;" (verse 34;) and therefore this is the same as to swear by Him who sitteth upon the circle of the heavens: "Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool;" (verse 35;) and he is as intimately present in earth as heaven: "Neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King;" and God is well known in her palaces. "Neither shalt thou swear by thy head; because thou canst not make

one hair white or black ;" (verse 36 ;) because even this, it is plain, is not thine, but God's, the sole disposer of all in heaven and earth. "But let your communication," (verse 37,) your conversation, your discourse with each other, "be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay ;" a bare, serious affirming or denying ; "for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil :"  
*εκ του πονηρου εστιν, is of the evil one ;* proceedeth from the devil, and is a mark of his children.

10. That our Lord does not here forbid the "swearing in judgment and truth," when we are required so to do by a magistrate, may appear, (1.) From the occasion of this part of his discourse,—the abuse he was here reproofing,—which was false swearing, and common swearing ; the swearing before a magistrate being quite out of the question.—(2.) From the very words wherein he forms the general conclusion: "Let your communication," or discourse, "be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay."—(3.) From his own example ; for he answered himself upon oath when required by a magistrate. When the high-priest said unto him, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God ;" Jesus immediately answered in the affirmative, "Thou hast said ;" (that is, the truth ;) "nevertheless," (or, rather, *moreover*,) "I say unto you, Hereafter shall you see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.)—(4.) From the example of God, even the Father, who, "willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." (Heb. vi. 17.)—(5.) From the example of St. Paul, who we think had the Spirit of God, and well understood the mind of his Master. "God is my witness," saith he, to the Romans, "that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers :"  
(Rom. i. 9 :) to the Corinthians, "I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth :"  
(2 Cor. i. 23 :) and to the Philippians, "God is my record, how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ." (Phil. i. 8.) Hence it undeniably appears, that if the apostle knew the meaning of his

Lord's words, they do not forbid swearing on weighty occasions even to one another : how much less before a magistrate !—And, lastly, from that assertion of the great apostle, concerning solemn swearing in general : (which it is impossible he could have mentioned without any touch of blame, if his Lord had totally forbidden it :) “Men verily swear by the greater ;” by one greater than themselves ; “and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.” (Heb. vi. 16.)

11. But the great lesson which our blessed Lord inculcates here, and which he illustrates by this example, is, that God is in all things, and that we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature ; that we should use and look upon nothing as separate from God, which indeed is a kind of practical Atheism ; but, with a true magnificence of thought, survey heaven and earth, and all that is therein, as contained by God in the hollow of his hand, who by his intimate presence holds them all in being, who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true sense, the soul of the universe.

II. 1. Thus far our Lord has been more directly employed in teaching the religion of the heart. He has shown what Christians are to be. He proceeds to show, what they are to do also ;—how inward holiness is to exert itself in our outward conversation. “Blessed,” saith he, “are the peace-makers ; for they shall be called the children of God.”

2. “The peace-makers :” the word in the original is *οι ειρηνοτομοι*. It is well known that *ειρηνη*, in the sacred writings, implies all manner of good ; every blessing that relates either to the soul or the body, to time or eternity. Accordingly, when St. Paul, in the titles of his epistles, wishes grace and peace to the Romans or the Corinthians, it is as if he had said, “As a fruit of the free, undeserved love and favour of God, may you enjoy all blessings, spiritual and temporal : all the good things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

3. Hence we may easily learn, in how wide a sense the term “peace-makers” is to be understood. In its

literal meaning it implies those lovers of God and man who utterly detest and abhor all strife and debate, all variance and contention; and accordingly labour with all their might, either to prevent this fire of hell from being kindled, or, when it is kindled, from breaking out, or, when it is broke out, from spreading any further. They endeavour to calm the stormy spirits of men, to quiet their turbulent passions, to soften the minds of contending parties, and, if possible, reconcile them to each other. They use all innocent arts, and employ all their strength, all the talents which God has given them, as well to preserve peace where it is, as to restore it where it is not. It is the joy of their heart to promote, to confirm, to increase, mutual good-will among men, but more especially among the children of God, however distinguished by things of smaller importance; that as they have all "one Lord, one faith," as they are all "called in one hope of their calling," so they may all "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

4. But, in the full extent of the word, a peace-maker is one that, as he hath opportunity, "doeth good unto all men;" one that, being filled with the love of God and of all mankind, cannot confine the expressions of it to his own family, or friends, or acquaintance, or party, or to those of his own opinions,—no, nor those who are partakers of like precious faith; but steps over all these narrow bounds, that he may do good to every man, that he may, some way or other, manifest his love to neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. He doeth good to them all as he hath opportunity, that is, on every possible occasion; "redeeming the time," in order thereto; buying up every opportunity, improving every hour, losing no moment wherein he may profit another. He does good, not of one particular kind, but good in general, in every possible way; employing herein all his talents of every kind, all his powers and faculties of body and soul, all his fortune, his interest, his reputa-

tion; desiring only that when his Lord cometh, he may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

5. He doeth good to the uttermost of his power, even to the bodies of all men. He rejoices to deal "his bread to the hungry," and to "cover the naked with a garment." Is any a stranger? He takes him in, and relieves him according to his necessities. Are any sick or in prison? He visits them, and administers such help as they stand most in need of. And all this he does, not as unto man; but remembering Him that hath said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

6. How much more does he rejoice, if he can do any good to the soul of any man! This power, indeed, belongeth unto God. It is he only that changes the heart, without which every other change is lighter than vanity. Nevertheless, it pleases Him who worketh all in all, to help man chiefly by man; to convey his own power, and blessing, and love, through one man to another. Therefore, although it be certain that "the help which is done upon earth, God doeth it himself;" yet has no man need, on this account, to stand idle in his vineyard. The peace-maker cannot: he is ever labouring therein, and, as an instrument in God's hand, preparing the ground for his Master's use, or sowing the seed of the kingdom, or watering what is already sown, if haply God may give the increase. According to the measure of grace which he has received, he uses all diligence, either to reprove the gross sinner, to reclaim those who run on headlong in the broad way of destruction; or "to give light to them that sit in darkness," and are ready to "perish for lack of knowledge;" or to "support the weak, to lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees;" or to bring back and heal that which was lame and turned out of the way. Nor is he less zealous to confirm those who are already striving to enter in at the strait gate; to strengthen those that stand, that they may "run with patience the race which is set before them;" to build up in their most holy faith those that know in whom they have believed; to

exhort them to stir up the gift of God which is in them, that, daily growing in grace, "an entrance may be ministered unto them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

7. "Blessed" are they who are thus continually employed in the work of faith and the labour of love; "for they shall be called," that is, *shall be*, (a common Hebraism,) "the children of God." God shall continue unto them the Spirit of adoption; yea, shall pour it more abundantly into their hearts. He shall bless them with all the blessings of his children. He shall acknowledge them as sons before angels and men; "and if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

III. 1. One would imagine such a person as has been above described, so full of genuine humility, so unaffectedly serious, so mild and gentle, so free from all selfish design, so devoted to God, and such an active lover of men, should be the darling of mankind. But our Lord was better acquainted with human nature in its present state. He therefore closes the character of this man of God with showing him the treatment he is to expect in the world. "Blessed," saith he, "are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

2. In order to understand this thoroughly, let us, first, inquire, Who are they that are persecuted? And this we may easily learn from St. Paul: "As of old, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now." (Gal. iv. 29.) "Yea," saith the apostle, "and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. iii. 12.) The same we are taught by St. John: "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 13, 14.) As if he had said, The brethren, the Christians, cannot be loved, but by them who have passed from death unto life. And most expressly by our Lord: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but

because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." (John xv. 18, &c.)

By all these scriptures it manifestly appears who they are that are persecuted; namely, the righteous: he "that is born of the Spirit;" "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus;" they that are "passed from death unto life;" those who are "not of the world;" all those who are meek and lowly in heart, that mourn for God, that hunger after his likeness; all that love God, and their neighbour, and therefore, as they have opportunity, do good unto all men.

3. If it be, secondly, inquired, why they are persecuted, the answer is equally plain and obvious. It is "for righteousness' sake;" because they are righteous; because they are born after the Spirit; because they "will live godly in Christ Jesus;" because they "are not of the world." Whatever may be pretended, this is the real cause: be their infirmities more or less, still, if it were not for this, they would be borne with, and the world would love its own. They are persecuted, because they are *poor in spirit*; that is, say the world, "poor-spirited, mean, dastardly souls, good for nothing, not fit to live in the world:"—because they *mourn*: "they are such dull, heavy, lumpish creatures, enough to sink any one's spirits that sees them! they are mere death-heads: they kill innocent mirth, and spoil company wherever they come:"—because they are *meek*: "tame, passive fools, just fit to be trampled upon:"—because they *hunger and thirst after righteousness*: "a parcel of hot-brained enthusiasts, gaping after they know not what, not content with rational religion, but running mad after raptures and inward feelings:"—because they are *merciful*, lovers of all, lovers of the evil and unthankful: "encouraging all manner of wickedness; nay, tempting people to do mischief by impunity: and men who, it is to be feared, have their own religion still to seek; very loose in their principles:"—because they are

*pure in heart*: “uncharitable creatures, that damn all the world, but those that are of their own sort! blasphemous wretches, that pretend to make God a liar, to live without sin!”—above all, because they are *peace-makers*; because they take all opportunities of doing good to all men. This is the grand reason why they have been persecuted in all ages, and will be till the restitution of all things: “If they would but keep their religion to themselves, it would be tolerable: but it is this spreading their errors, this infecting so many others, which is not to be endured. They do so much mischief in the world, that they ought to be tolerated no longer. It is true, the men do some things well enough; they relieve some of the poor: but this, too, is only done to gain the more to their party; and so, in effect, to do the more mischief!” Thus the men of the world sincerely think and speak. And the more the kingdom of God prevails, the more the peace-makers are enabled to propagate lowliness, meekness, and all other divine tempers, the more mischief is done, in their account: consequently, the more are they enraged against the authors of this, and the more vehemently will they persecute them.

4. Let us, thirdly, inquire, Who are they that persecute them? St. Paul answers, “He that is born after the flesh:” every one who is not “born of the Spirit,” or, at least, desirous so to be; all that do not at least labour to “live godly in Christ Jesus;” all that are not “passed from death unto life,” and, consequently, cannot “love the brethren;” “the world,” that is, according to our Saviour’s account, they who “know not him that sent me;” they who know not God, even the loving, pardoning God, by the teaching of his own Spirit.

The reason is plain: the spirit which is in the world is directly opposite to the Spirit which is of God. It must therefore needs be, that those who are of the world will be opposite to those who are of God. There is the utmost contrariety between them, in all their opinions, their desires, designs, and tempers. And hitherto the leopard and the kid cannot lie down in peace together.

The proud, because he is proud, cannot but persecute the lowly; the light and airy, those that mourn: and so in every other kind; the unlikeness of disposition (were there no other) being a perpetual ground of enmity. Therefore, were it only on this account, all the servants of the devil will persecute the children of God.

5. Should it be inquired, fourthly, how they will persecute them, it may be answered in general, just in that manner and measure which the wise Disposer of all sees will be most for his glory,—will tend most to his children's growth in grace, and the enlargement of his own kingdom. There is no one branch of God's government of the world which is more to be admired than this. His ear is never heavy to the threatenings of the persecutor, or the cry of the persecuted. His eye is ever open, and his hand stretched out to direct every the minutest circumstance. When the storm shall begin, how high it shall rise, which way it shall point its course, when and how it shall end, are all determined by his unerring wisdom. The ungodly are only a sword of his; an instrument which he uses as it pleaseth him, and which itself, when the gracious ends of his providence are answered, is cast into the fire.

At some rare times, as when Christianity was planted first, and while it was taking root in the earth; as also when the pure doctrine of Christ began to be planted again in our nation; God permitted the storm to rise high, and his children were called to resist unto blood. There was a peculiar reason why he suffered this with regard to the apostles, that their evidence might be the more unexceptionable. But from the annals of the church we learn another, and a far different reason, why he suffered the heavy persecutions which arose in the second and third centuries; namely, because "the mystery of iniquity" did so strongly "work;" because of the monstrous corruptions which even then reigned in the church; these God chastised, and at the same time strove to heal, by those severe but necessary visitations.

Perhaps the same observation may be made, with regard to the grand persecution in our own land. God

had dealt very graciously with our nation: he had poured out various blessings upon us; he had given us peace abroad and at home; and a king wise and good beyond his years: and, above all, he had caused the pure light of his gospel to arise and shine among us. But what return did he find? "He looked for righteousness; but behold a cry;" a cry of oppression and wrong, of ambition and injustice, of malice, and fraud, and covetousness. Yea, the cry of those who even then expired in the flames entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. It was then God arose to maintain his own cause against those that held the truth in unrighteousness. Then he sold them into the hands of their persecutors, by a judgment mixed with mercy; an affliction to punish, and yet a medicine to heal, the grievous backslidings of his people.

6. But it is seldom God suffers the storm to rise so high as torture, or death, or bonds, or imprisonment. Whereas his children are frequently called to endure the lighter kinds of persecution: they frequently suffer the estrangement of kinsfolks,—the loss of the friends that were as their own soul. They find the truth of their Lord's word, (concerning the *event*, though not the *design*, of his coming,) "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace upon earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division." (Luke xii. 51.) And hence will naturally follow loss of business or employment, and consequently of substance. But all these circumstances likewise are under the wise direction of God, who allots to every one what is most expedient for him.

7. But the persecution which attends all the children of God is that our Lord describes in the following words:—"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you,"—shall persecute by reviling you,—and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." This cannot fail; it is the very badge of our discipleship; it is one of the seals of our calling; it is a sure portion entailed on all the children of God: if we have it not, we are bastards, and not sons: straight through evil report, as well as good report lies the only way to the kingdom

The meek, serious, humble, zealous lovers of God and man are of good report among their brethren ; but of evil report with the world, who count and treat them "as the filth and off-scouring of all things."

8. Indeed some have supposed that before the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, the scandal of the cross will cease ; that God will cause Christians to be esteemed and loved even by those who are as yet in their sins. Yea, and sure it is, that even now he at some times suspends the contempt as well as the fierceness of men ; "he makes a man's enemies to be at peace with him" for a season, and gives him favour with his bitterest persecutors. But setting aside this exempt case, the scandal of the cross is not yet ceased ; but a man may say still, "If I please men, I am not the servant of Christ." Let no man therefore regard that pleasing suggestion, (pleasing doubtless to flesh and blood,) "that bad men only *pretend* to hate and despise them that are good, but do indeed love and esteem them in their hearts." Not so : they may employ them sometimes ; but it is for their own profit. They may put confidence in them ; for they know their ways are not like other men's. But still they love them not ; unless so far as the Spirit of God may be striving with them. Our Saviour's words are express : "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own ; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Yea, (setting aside what exceptions may be made by the preventing grace, or the peculiar providence, of God,) it hateth them as cordially and sincerely as ever it did their Master.

9. It remains only to inquire, How are the children of God to behave with regard to persecution ? And, first, they ought not knowingly or designedly to bring it upon themselves. This is contrary both to the example and advice of our Lord and all his apostles ; who teach us not only not to seek, but to avoid it, as far as we can, without injuring our conscience ; without giving up any part of that righteousness which we are to prefer before life itself. So our Lord expressly : "When they perse

cute you in this city, flee ye into another;" which is, indeed, when it can be taken, a most unexceptionable way of avoiding persecution.

10. Yet think not that you can always avoid it, either by this or any other means. If ever that idle imagination steals into your heart, put it to flight by that earnest caution, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." But will this screen you from persecution? Not unless you have more wisdom than your Master, or more innocence than the Lamb of God.

Neither desire to avoid it, to escape it wholly; for if you do, you are none of his. If you escape the persecution, you escape the blessing; the blessing of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. If you are not persecuted for righteousness' sake, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. But if we deny him, he will also deny us."

11. Nay, rather, "rejoice and be exceeding glad," when men persecute you for his sake; when they persecute you by reviling you, and by "saying all manner of evil against you falsely;" which they will not fail to mix with every kind of persecution: they must blacken you to excuse themselves: "For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you;"—those who were most eminently holy in heart and life; yea, and all the righteous which ever have been from the beginning of the world. Rejoice, because by this mark also ye know unto whom ye belong; and "because great is your reward in heaven,"—the reward purchased by the blood of the covenant, and freely bestowed in proportion to your sufferings, as well as to your holiness of heart and life. "Be exceeding glad;" knowing that these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

12. Meantime, let no persecution turn you out of the

way of lowliness and meekness, of love and beneficence "Ye have heard" indeed "that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" (Matt. v. 38;) and your miserable teachers have hence allowed you to avenge yourselves, to return evil for evil: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil:"—not thus; not by returning it in kind. "But," rather than do this, "whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

So invincible let thy meekness be. And be thy love suitable thereto. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Only, give not away that which is another man's, that which is not thine own. Therefore, (1.) Take care to owe no man any thing: for what thou owest is not thine own, but another man's. (2.) Provide for those of thine own household. This also God hath required of thee; and what is necessary to sustain them in life and godliness is also not thine own. Then, (3.) Give or lend all that remains, from day to day, or from year to year: only, first, seeing thou canst not give or lend to all, remember the household of faith.

13. The meekness and love we are to feel, the kindness we are to show to them which persecute us for righteousness' sake, our blessed Lord describes further in the following verses: O! that they were engraven upon our hearts! "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy:" (Matt. v. 43, &c. :) God indeed had said only the former part, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour;" the children of the devil had added the latter, "and hate thy enemy:" "But I say unto you," (1.) "Love your enemies:" see that you bear a tender good-will to those who are most bitter of spirit against you; who wish you all manner of evil. (2.) "Bless them that curse you." Are there any whose bitterness of spirit breaks forth in bitter words? who are

continually cursing and reproaching you when you are present, and "saying all evil against you" when absent? So much the rather do you bless: in conversing with them, use all mildness and softness of language. Reprove them, by repeating a better lesson before them; by showing them how they ought to have spoken. And, in speaking of them, say all the good you can, without violating the rules of truth and justice. (3.) "Do good to them that hate you:" let your actions show that you are as real in love, as they in hatred. Return good for evil. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." (4.) If you can do nothing more, at least "pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." You can never be disabled from doing this; nor can all their malice or violence hinder you. Pour out your souls to God, not only for those who did this once, but now repent:—this is a little thing: "If thy brother, seven times a day, turn and say unto thee, I repent;" (Luke xvii. 4;) that is, if after ever so many relapses, he give thee reason to believe that he is really and thoroughly changed; then thou shalt forgive him, so as to trust him, to put him in thy bosom, as if he had never sinned against thee at all:—but pray for, wrestle with God for, those who do not repent, that now despitefully use thee and persecute thee. Thus far forgive them, "not until seven times only, but until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 22.) Whether they repent or no, yea, though they appear farther and farther from it, yet show them this instance of kindness: "that ye may be the children," that ye may approve yourselves the genuine children, "of your Father which is in heaven;" who shows his goodness by giving such blessings as they are capable of, even to his stubbornest enemies; "who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" (Matt. v. 46;)—who pretend to no religion; whom ye yourselves acknowledge to be without God in the world. "And if ye salute," show kindness in word or deed to, "your

brethren," your friends or kinsfolk, "only; what do ye more than others?"—than those who have no religion at all? "Do not even the publicans so?" (Matt. v. 47.) Nay, but follow ye a better pattern than them. In patience, in longsuffering, in mercy, in beneficence of every kind, to all, even to your bitterest persecutors; "be ye," Christians, "perfect," in kind, though not in degree, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48.)

IV. Behold Christianity in its native form, as delivered by its great Author! This is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ! Such he presents it to him whose eyes are opened. See a picture of God so far as he is imitable by man! a picture drawn by God's own hand. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!" Or, rather, wonder and adore! Rather cry out, "Is this the religion of Jesus of Nazareth? the religion which I persecuted? Let me no more be found even to fight against God. Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" What beauty appears in the whole! How just a symmetry! What exact proportion in every part! How desirable is the happiness here described! How venerable, how lovely the holiness! This is the spirit of religion; the quintessence of it. These are indeed the fundamentals of Christianity. O that we may not be hearers of it only!—"like a man beholding his own face in a glass, who goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Nay, but let us steadily "look into this perfect law of liberty, and continue therein." Let us not rest, until every line thereof is transcribed into our own hearts. Let us watch, and pray, and believe, and love, and "strive for the mastery," till every part of it shall appear on our soul, graven there by the finger of God; till we are "holy as he which hath called us is holy, perfect as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

### QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXIII.

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- Ques. 1. (I. 1.) Of what are excellent things spoken?  
Ques. 2. (I. 2.) Who are the pure in heart?  
Ques. 3. (I. 3.) Has this been highly regarded by the world?  
Ques. 4. (I. 4.) Is there any excuse for retaining any occasion of impurity?  
Ques. 5. (I. 5.) What is here said of marriage? Of polygamy?  
Ques. 6. (I. 6.) What is here said of the pure in heart?  
Ques. 7. (I. 7.) Who are they who see God?  
Ques. 8. (I. 8.) In what manner especially?  
Ques. 9. (I. 9.) What is said of the practice of swearing?  
Ques. 10. (I. 10.) Is lawful swearing forbidden?  
Ques. 11. (I. 11.) What great lesson does our Lord inculcate?  
Ques. 12. (II. 1.) What has our Lord so far shown us?  
Ques. 13. (II. 2.) What is the meaning of peace-makers?  
Ques. 14. (II. 3.) What do we learn from this?  
Ques. 15. (II. 4.) What is a peace-maker in the full sense of the word?  
Ques. 16. (II. 5.) To whom does he do good? To what extent?  
Ques. 17. (II. 6.) Why does he rejoice in spiritual good?  
Ques. 18. (II. 7.) Who are here called "blessed?"  
Ques. 19. (III. 1.) Is this character beloved of mankind?  
Ques. 20. (III. 2.) What do we first inquire?  
Ques. 21. (III. 3.) What is the second inquiry?  
Ques. 22. (III. 4.) What is the third inquiry?

Ques. 23. (III. 5.) What is the fourth inquiry?

Ques. 24. (III. 6.) Does God suffer the storm to rise high often?

Ques. 25. (III. 7.) How is persecution described?

Ques. 26. (III. 8.) What have some supposed?

Ques. 27. (III. 9.) What is the last inquiry?

Ques. 28. (III. 10.) Can persecution be always avoided?

Ques. 29. (III. 11.) What should we do rather than seek always to avoid it?

Ques. 30. (III. 12.) What caution is here given?

Ques. 31. (III. 13.) How does our Lord describe our duty?

Ques. 32. (III. 14.) How does the sermon conclude?

## SERMON XXIV.

### ANALYSIS.

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I. **THE** beauty of holiness—of the inward man of the heart. Bears the shape of God visibly impressed upon it. This beauty, in the estimation of some, is clogged with doing and suffering. Eminent men have thus spoken, and advised others to cease from all outward action, and to withdraw from the world. This device of Satan was open to the eye of our Lord, and he therefore guards us against it. To explain and enforce the words of the text, Christianity is shown to be a social religion. Solitude and society may be profitably intermixed, but solitude must not be allowed to swallow up all our time. Meekness has no place except in society. Peace-making involves intercourse with men. Intercourse with men who know not God allowable and, in order to the full exertion of all good tempers, necessary.

II. Religious influence cannot be concealed. The illustration of the city upon a hill. Holiness becomes conspicuous; the light shines in the midst of darkness. It is therefore impossible to keep our religion from being seen. The candle is not placed under a bushel, but on a candlestick. God has not only given these precepts, but has given his example also. Notwithstanding, there are many plausible reasons given for a solitary religion.

III. To answer these objections. It is objected that religion does not lie in outward things, but in the heart, the soul. This is true; but if the root of religion is in the heart, it will send forth the branches that prove its existence. While bare, outside religion, which has no root in

the soul, is worth nothing, yet God delights in the outward service which is prompted by worship of the heart. A second objection, that love is all, is granted thus far, but love does not supersede either faith or good works. We are thus to follow after charity in doing good to others. Because God is a Spirit, and would have spiritual worship from us, we ought therefore to worship him with all the powers of the mind, and to glorify him with our bodies also. It follows that contemplation is only one way of worshiping God. The grand objection that experience of the use of ordinances has not found them profitable. To this it is answered, because they were substituted for Christ. Trying to do good, to reform sinners, and failing therein, is only to follow in the steps of our Lord.

IV. Therefore, the light of our precept and example must shine forth, having the one design to glorify God and to save the souls of men.

## SERMON XXIV.

## UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

## DISCOURSE IV.

- 'Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.*
- "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*
- "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.*
- "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—MATT. v. 13-16.*

1. THE beauty of holiness, of that inward man of the heart which is renewed after the image of God, cannot but strike every eye which God hath opened,—every enlightened understanding. The ornament of a meek, humble, loving spirit, will at least excite the approbation of all those who are capable, in any degree, of discerning spiritual good and evil. From the hour men begin to emerge out of the darkness which covers the giddy, unthinking world, they cannot but perceive how desirable a thing it is to be thus transformed into the likeness of Him that created us. This inward religion bears the shape of God so visibly impressed upon it, that a soul must be wholly immersed in flesh and blood when he can doubt of its divine original. We may say

of this, in a secondary sense, even as of the Son of God himself, that it is "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person;" *απαυγασμα της δοξης αυτου*,—"the beaming forth of his" eternal "glory;" and yet so tempered and softened, that even the children of men may herein see God and live; *χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου*,—"the character, the stamp, the living impression of his person," who is the fountain of beauty and love, the original source of all excellency and perfection

2 If religion, therefore, were carried no farther than this, they could have no doubt concerning it; they should have no objection against pursuing it with the whole ardour of their souls. "But why," say they, "is it clogged with other things? What need of loading it with *doing* and *suffering*? These are what damps the vigour of the soul, and sinks it down to earth again. Is it not enough to 'follow after charity;' to soar upon the wings of love? Will it not suffice to worship God, who is a Spirit, with the spirit of our minds, without encumbering ourselves with outward things, or even thinking of them at all? Is it not better, that the whole extent of our thought should be taken up with high and heavenly contemplation; and that instead of busying ourselves at all about externals, we should only commune with God in our hearts?"

3. Many eminent men have spoken thus; have advised us "to cease from all outward action;" wholly to withdraw from the world; to leave the body behind us; to abstract ourselves from all sensible things; to have no concern at all about outward religion, but to *work all virtues in the will*; as the far more excellent way, more perfective of the soul, as well as more acceptable to God.

4. It needed not that any should tell our Lord of this masterpiece of the wisdom from beneath; this fairest of all the devices wherewith Satan hath ever perverted the right ways of the Lord! And oh! what instruments hath he found, from time to time, to employ in this his

service, to wield this grand engine of hell against some of the most important truths of God!—men that would “deceive, if it were possible, the very elect,” the men of faith and love; yea, that have for a season deceived and led away no inconsiderable number of them, who have fallen in all ages into the gilded snare, and hardly escaped with the skin of their teeth.

5. But has our Lord been wanting on his part? Has he not sufficiently guarded us against this pleasing delusion? Has he not armed us here with armour of proof against Satan “transformed into an angel of light?” Yea, verily: he here defends, in the clearest and strongest manner, the active, patient religion he had just described. What can be fuller and plainer than the words he immediately subjoins to what he had said of doing and suffering? “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

In order fully to explain and enforce these important words, I shall endeavour to show, first, that Christianity is essentially a social religion; and that to turn it into a solitary one is to destroy it. Secondly, that to conceal this religion is impossible, as well as utterly contrary to the design of its Author. I shall, thirdly, answer some objections; and conclude the whole with a practical application.

I. I. First. I shall endeavour to show, that Christianity is essentially a social religion; and that to turn it into a solitary religion is indeed to destroy it.

By Christianity, I mean that method of worshipping God which is here revealed to man by Jesus Christ

When I say, This is essentially a social religion, I mean not only that it cannot subsist so well, but that it cannot subsist at all, without society,—without living and conversing with other men. And in showing this, I shall confine myself to those considerations which will arise from the very discourse before us. But if this be shown, then, doubtless, to turn this religion into a solitary one is to destroy it.

Not that we can in anywise condemn the intermixing solitude or retirement with society. This is not only allowable, but expedient; nay, it is necessary, as daily experience shows, for every one that either already is, or desires to be, a real Christian. It can hardly be, that we should spend one entire day in a continued intercourse with men, without suffering loss in our soul, and in some measure grieving the Holy Spirit of God. We have need daily to retire from the world, at least morning and evening, to converse with God, to commune more freely with our Father which is in secret. Nor indeed can a man of experience condemn even longer seasons of religious retirement, so they do not imply any neglect of the worldly employ wherein the providence of God has placed us.

2. Yet such retirement must not swallow up all our time: this would be to destroy, not advance, true religion. For, that the religion described by our Lord in the foregoing words cannot subsist without society, without our living and conversing with other men, is manifest from hence, that several of the most essential branches thereof can have no place if we have no intercourse with the world.

3. There is no disposition, for instance, which is more essential to Christianity than meekness. Now although this, as it implies resignation to God, or patience in pain and sickness, may subsist in a desert, in a hermit's cell, in total solitude; yet as it implies (which it no less necessarily does) mildness, gentleness, and long-suffering, it cannot possibly have a being, it has no place under heaven, without an intercourse with other

men ; so that to attempt turning this into a solitary virtue is to destroy it from the face of the earth.

4. Another necessary branch of true Christianity is peace-making, or doing of good. That this is equally essential with any of the other parts of the religion of Jesus Christ, there can be no stronger argument to evince, (and therefore it would be absurd to allege any other,) than that it is here inserted in the original plan he has laid down of the fundamentals of his religion. Therefore, to set aside this is the same daring insult on the authority of our Great Master as to set aside mercifulness, purity of heart, or any other branch of his institution. But this is apparently set aside by all who call us to the wilderness ; who recommend entire solitude either to the babes, or the young men, or the fathers in Christ. For will any man affirm that a solitary Christian (so called, though it is little less than a contradiction in terms) can be a merciful man,—that is, one that takes every opportunity of doing all good to all men? What can be more plain, than that this fundamental branch of the religion of Jesus Christ cannot possibly subsist without society, without our living and conversing with other men?

5. “But is it not expedient, however,” one might naturally ask, “to converse only with good men,—only with those whom we know to be meek and merciful,—holy of heart, and holy of life? Is it not expedient to refrain from any conversation or intercourse with men of the opposite character,—men who do not obey, perhaps do not believe, the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?” The advice of St. Paul to the Christians at Corinth may seem to favour this: “I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators.” (1 Cor. v. 9.) And it is certainly not advisable so to company with them, or with any of the workers of iniquity, as to have any particular familiarity or any strictness of friendship with them. To contract or continue an intimacy with any such is no way expedient for a Chris-

tian. It must necessarily expose him to abundance of dangers and snares, out of which he can have no reasonable hope of deliverance.

But the apostle does not forbid us to have any intercourse at all even with the men that know not God: "For then," says he, "ye must needs go out of the world;" which he could never advise them to do. But he subjoins, "If any man that is called a brother," that professes himself a Christian, "be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner;" (1 Cor. v. 11;) "now I have written unto you not to keep company with them; with such an one no not to eat." This must necessarily imply, that we break off all familiarity, all intimacy of acquaintance, with him. "Yet count him not," saith the apostle elsewhere, "as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother;" (2 Thess. iii. 15;) plainly showing that even in such a case as this, we are not to renounce all fellowship with him. So that there is no advice to separate wholly even from wicked men. Yea, these very words teach us quite the contrary.

6. Much more the words of our Lord; who is so far from directing us to break off all commerce with the world, that without it, according to his account of Christianity, we cannot be Christians at all. It would be easy to show, that some intercourse even with ungodly and unholy men is absolutely needful, in order to the full exertion of every temper which he has described as the way to the kingdom; that it is indispensably necessary, in order to the complete exercise of poverty of spirit, of mourning, and of every other disposition which has a place here, in the genuine religion of Jesus Christ. Yea, it is necessary to the very being of several of them; of that meekness, for example, which, instead of demanding "an eye for an eye, or a tooth for a tooth," doth "not resist evil," but causes us rather, when smitten "on the right cheek, to turn the other also;"—of that mercifulness, whereby we "love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good

to them that hate us, and pray for them which despitefully use us and persecute us;”—and of that complication of love and all holy tempers which is exercised in suffering for righteousness' sake. Now all these, it is clear, could have no being, were we to have no commerce with any but real Christians.

7. Indeed, were we wholly to separate ourselves from sinners, how could we possibly answer that character which our Lord gives us in these very words? “Ye” (Christians, ye that are lowly, serious, and meek; ye that hunger after righteousness, that love God and man, that do good to all, and therefore suffer evil; ye) “are the salt of the earth:” it is your very nature to season whatever is round about you. It is the nature of the divine savour which is in you, to spread to whatsoever you touch; to diffuse itself, on every side, to all those among whom you are. This is the great reason why the providence of God has so mingled you together with other men, that whatever grace you have received of God may through you be communicated to others; that every holy temper and word and work of yours may have an influence on them also. By this means a check will, in some measure, be given to the corruption which is in the world; and a small part, at least, saved from the general infection, and rendered holy and pure before God.

8. That we may the more diligently labour to season all we can with every holy and heavenly temper, our Lord proceeds to show the desperate state of those who do not impart the religion they have received; which indeed they cannot possibly fail to do, so long as it remains in their own hearts. “If the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men:” if ye, who were holy and heavenly-minded, and consequently zealous of good works, have no longer that savour in yourselves, and do therefore no longer season others; if you are

grown flat, insipid, dead, both careless of your own souls, and useless to the souls of other men; wherewith shall ye be salted? How shall ye be recovered? What help? What hope? Can tasteless salt be restored to its savour? No; "it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out," even as the mire in the streets, "and to be trodden under foot of men," to be overwhelmed with everlasting contempt. If ye had never known the Lord, there might have been hope,—if ye had never been "found in him:" but what can you now say to that, his solemn declaration, just parallel to what he hath here spoken? "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he," the Father, "taketh away. He that abideth in me, and I in him, bringeth forth much fruit." "If a man abide not in me," or do not bring forth fruit, "he is cast out as a branch, and withered; and men gather them," not to plant them again, but "to cast them into the fire." (John xv. 2, 5, 6.)

9. Toward those who have never tasted of the good word, God is indeed pitiful and of tender mercy. But justice takes place with regard to those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and have afterwards turned back "from the holy commandment" then "delivered to them." "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened;" (Heb. vi. 4, &c. ;) in whose hearts God had once shined, to enlighten them with the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; "who have tasted of the heavenly gift," of redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins; "and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," of lowliness, of meekness, and of the love of God and man shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto them; and "have fallen away,"—*καταπίπτουσιν*,—(here is not a supposition, but a flat declaration of matter of fact,) "to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

But that none may misunderstand these awful words, it should be carefully observed, (1.) Who they are that are here spoken of; namely, they, and they only, who were once thus "enlightened;" they only, "who did taste of" that "heavenly gift, and were" thus "made partakers of the Holy Ghost." So that all who have not experienced these things are wholly unconcerned in this scripture. (2.) What that falling away is, which is here spoken of: it is an absolute, total apostasy. A believer may fall, and not fall away. He may fall and rise again. And if he should fall, even into sin, yet this case, dreadful as it is, is not desperate. For "we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins." But let him above all things beware, lest his "heart be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin;" lest he should sink lower and lower, till he wholly fall away, till he become as salt that hath lost its savour: for if we thus sin wilfully, after we have received the experimental "knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

II. 1. "But although we may not wholly separate ourselves from mankind, although it be granted we ought to season them with the religion which God has wrought in our hearts, yet may not this be done insensibly? May we not convey this into others in a secret and almost imperceptible manner, so that scarce any one shall be able to observe how or when it is done?—even as salt conveys its own savour into that which is seasoned thereby, without any noise, and without being liable to any outward observation. And if so, although we do not go out of the world, yet we may lie hid in it. We may thus far keep our religion to ourselves: and not offend those whom we cannot help."

2. Of this plausible reasoning of flesh and blood, our Lord was well aware also: and he has given a full answer to it in those words which come now to be

considered ; in explaining which, I shall endeavour to show, as I proposed to do in the second place, that so long as true religion abides in our hearts, it is impossible to conceal it, as well as absolutely contrary to the design of its great Author.

And, first, it is impossible for any that have it, to conceal the religion of Jesus Christ. This our Lord makes plain beyond all contradiction, by a twofold comparison: "Ye are the light of the world: a city set upon a hill cannot be hid." Ye Christians are "the light of the world," with regard both to your tempers and actions. Your holiness makes you as conspicuous as the sun in the midst of heaven. As ye cannot go out of the world, so neither can ye stay in it without appearing to all mankind. Ye may not flee from men: and while ye are among them, it is impossible to hide your lowliness and meekness, and those other dispositions whereby ye aspire to be perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. Love cannot be hid any more than light; and least of all, when it shines forth in action, when ye exercise yourselves in the labour of love, in beneficence of every kind. As well may men think to hide a city, as to hide a Christian; yea, as well may they conceal a city set upon a hill, as a holy, zealous, active lover of God and man.

3. It is true, men who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, will take all possible pains to prove that the light which is in you is darkness. They will say evil, all manner of evil, falsely, of the good which is in you; they will lay to your charge that which is farthest from your thoughts, which is the very reverse of all you are, and all you do. And your patient continuance in well-doing, your meekly suffering all things for the Lord's sake, your calm, humble joy in the midst of persecution, your unwearied labour to overcome evil with good, will make you still more visible and conspicuous than ye were before.

4. So impossible it is to keep our religion from being seen, unless we cast it away; so vain is the thought of hiding the light, unless by putting it out! Sure it is, that a secret, unobserved religion cannot be the religion of Jesus Christ. Whatever religion can be concealed, is not Christianity. If a Christian could be hid, he could not be compared to "a city set upon a hill;" to "the light of the world," the sun shining from heaven, and seen by all the world below. Never, therefore, let it enter into the heart of him whom God hath renewed in the spirit of his mind, to hide that light, to keep his religion to himself; especially considering it is not only impossible to conceal true Christianity, but likewise absolutely contrary to the design of the great Author of it.

5. This plainly appears from the following words: "Neither do men light a candle to put it under a bushel." As if he had said, As men do not light a candle only to cover and conceal it, so neither does God enlighten any soul with his glorious knowledge and love, to have it covered or concealed, either by prudence, falsely so called, or shame or voluntary humility; to have it hid either in a desert, or in the world; either by avoiding men, or in conversing with them. "But they put it on a candlestick, and it giveth light to all that are in the house:" in like manner, it is the design of God that every Christian should be in an open point of view; that he may give light to all around, that he may visibly express the religion of Jesus Christ.

6. Thus hath God in all ages spoken to the world, not only by precept, but by example also. He hath "not left himself without witness," in any nation where the sound of the gospel hath gone forth, without a few who have testified his truth by their lives as well as their words. These have been "as lights shining in a dark place." And from time to time they have been the means of enlightening some, of preserving a remnant, •

little seed which was "counted unto the Lord for a generation." They have led a few poor sheep out of the darkness of the world, and guided their feet into the way of peace.

7. One might imagine that, where both Scripture and the reason of things speak so clearly and expressly, there could not be much advanced on the other side, at least not with any appearance of truth. But they who imagine this know little of the depths of Satan. After all that Scripture and reason have said, so exceeding plausible are the pretences for solitary religion, for a Christian's going out of the world, or at least hiding himself in it, that we need all the wisdom of God to see through the snare, and all the power of God to escape it; so many and strong are the objections which have been brought against being social, open, active Christians.

III. 1. To answer these, was the third thing which I proposed. And, first, it has been often objected, that religion does not lie in outward things, but in the heart, the inmost soul; that it is the union of the soul with God; the life of God in the soul of man; that outside religion is nothing worth; seeing God "delighteth not in burnt-offerings," in outward services, but a pure and holy heart is the "sacrifice he will not despise."

I answer, It is most true, that the root of religion lies in the heart; in the inmost soul; that this is the union of the soul with God, the life of God in the soul of man. But if this root be really in the heart, it cannot but put forth branches. And these are the several instances of outward obedience, which partake of the same nature with the root; and, consequently, are not only marks or signs, but substantial parts, of religion.

It is also true, that bare outside religion, which has no root in the heart, is nothing worth; that God delighteth not in *such* outward services, no more than in Jewish burnt-offerings; and that a pure and holy heart is a sacrifice with which he is always well

pleased. But he is also well pleased with all that outward service which arises from the heart; with the sacrifice of our prayers, (whether public or private,) of our praises and thanksgivings; with the sacrifice of our goods, humbly devoted to him, and employed wholly to his glory; and with that of our bodies, which he peculiarly claims, which the apostle beseeches us, "by the mercies of God, to present unto him, a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God."

2. A second objection, nearly related to this, is, that love is all in all; that it is "the fulfilling of the law," "the end of the commandment," of every commandment of God; that all we do, and all we suffer, if we have not charity or love, profiteth us nothing; and therefore the apostle directs us to "follow after charity," and terms this "the more excellent way."

I answer, It is granted, that the love of God and man, arising from faith unfeigned, is all in all, the fulfilling of the law, the end of every commandment of God. It is true, that without this, whatever we do, whatever we suffer, profits us nothing. But it does not follow, that love is all in such a sense as to supersede either faith or good works. It is "the fulfilling of the law," not by releasing us from, but by constraining us to obey, it. It is "the end of the commandment," as every commandment leads to and centres in it. It is allowed, that whatever we do or suffer without love profits us nothing: but withal, whatever we do or suffer in love, though it were only the suffering reproach for Christ, or the giving a cup of cold water in his name, it shall in no wise lose its reward.

3. "But does not the apostle direct us to 'follow after charity?' And does he not term it 'a more excellent way!'" He does direct us to "follow after charity;" but not after that alone. His words are, "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts." (1 Cor. xiv. 1.) Yea, "follow after charity;" and desire to spend and be spent for your brethren. "Follow after charity;" and as you have opportunity, do good to all mer

In the same verse wherein he terms this, the way of love, "a more excellent way," he directs the Corinthians to desire other gifts besides it; yea, to desire them earnestly. "Covet earnestly," saith he, "the best gifts; and yet I show unto you a more excellent way." (1 Cor. xii. 31.) More excellent than what? Than the gifts of healing, of speaking with tongues, and of interpreting, mentioned in the preceding verse; but not more excellent than the way of obedience. Of this the apostle is not speaking; neither is he speaking of outward religion at all: so that this text is quite wide of the present question.

But suppose the apostle had been speaking of outward as well as inward religion, and comparing them together; suppose, in the comparison, he had given the preference ever so much to the latter; suppose he had preferred (as he justly might) a loving heart, before all outward works whatever; yet it would not follow that we were to reject either one or the other. No; God hath joined them together from the beginning of the world; and let not man put them asunder.

4. "But 'God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.' And is not this enough? Nay, ought we not to employ the whole strength of our mind herein? Does not attending to outward things clog the soul, that it cannot soar aloft in holy contemplation? Does it not damp the vigour of our thought? Has it not a natural tendency to encumber and distract the mind? Whereas St. Paul would have us to be 'without carefulness,' and to 'wait upon the Lord without distraction.'"

I answer, "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." Yea, and this is enough: we ought to employ the whole strength of our mind therein. But then I would ask, What is it to worship God, a Spirit, in spirit and in truth? Why, it is to worship him with our spirit; to worship him in that manner which none but spirits are capable of. It is to believe in him, as a wise, just, holy Being, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and yet merciful, gracious, and

longsuffering; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin; casting all our sins behind his back, and accepting us in the Beloved. It is, to love him, to delight in him, to desire him, with all our heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; to imitate him we love, by purifying ourselves even as He is pure; and to obey him whom we love, and in whom we believe, both in thought, and word, and work. Consequently, one branch of the worshipping God in spirit and in truth is, the keeping his outward commandments. To glorify him, therefore, with our bodies as well as with our spirits; to go through outward work with hearts lifted up to him; to make our daily employments a sacrifice to God; to buy and sell, to eat and drink to his glory;—this is worshipping God in spirit and in truth, as much as the praying to him in a wilderness.

5. But if so, then contemplation is only one way of worshipping God in spirit and in truth. Therefore to give ourselves up entirely to this would be to destroy many branches of spiritual worship, all equally acceptable to God, and equally profitable, not hurtful, to the soul. For it is a great mistake, to suppose that an attention to those outward things, whereto the providence of God hath called us, is any clog to a Christian, or any hinderance at all to his always seeing Him that is invisible. It does not at all damp the ardour of his thought; it does not encumber or distract his mind; it gives him no uneasy or hurtful care, who does it all as unto the Lord; who hath learned, whatsoever he doeth in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus; having only one eye of the soul, which moves round on outward things, and one immovably fixed on God. Learn what this meaneth, ye poor recluses, that you may clearly discern your own littleness of faith; yea, that you may no longer judge others by yourselves, go and learn what that meaneth:—

“Thou, O Lord, in tender love,  
Dost all my burdens bear;  
Lift my heart to things above,  
And fix it ever there.

Calm on tumult's wheel I sit;  
Midst busy multitudes alone;  
Sweetly waiting at thy feet,  
Till all thy will be done"

6. But the grand objection is still behind. "We appeal," say they, "to experience. Our light did shine; we used outward things many years: and yet they profited nothing. We attended on all the ordinances; but we were no better for it; nor indeed any one else: nay, we were the worse: for we fancied ourselves Christians for so doing, when we knew not what Christianity meant."

I allow the fact: I allow that you and ten thousand more have thus abused the ordinances of God; mistaking the means for the end; supposing that the doing these, or some other outward works, either was the religion of Jesus Christ, or would be accepted in the place of it. But let the abuse be taken away, and the use remain. Now use all outward things, but use them with a constant eye to the renewal of your soul in righteousness and true holiness.

7. But this is not all: they affirm, "Experience likewise shows, that the trying to do good is but lost labour. What does it avail to feed or clothe men's bodies, if they are just dropping into everlasting fire? And what good can any man do to their souls? If these are changed, God doeth it himself. Besides, all men are either good, at least desirous so to be, or obstinately evil. Now the former have no need of us: let them ask help of God, and it shall be given them. And the latter will receive no help from us; nay, and our Lord forbids to 'cast our pearls before swine.'"

I answer, (1.) Whether they will finally be lost or saved, you are expressly commanded to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked. If you can, and do not, whatever becomes of them, you shall go away into everlasting fire. (2.) Though it is God only changes hearts, yet he generally doeth it by man. It is our part to do all that in us lies, as diligently as if we could change them ourselves, and then to leave the event to him

(3.) God, in answer to their prayers, builds up his children by each other in every good gift; nourishing and strengthening the whole "body by that which every joint supplieth." So that "the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee;" no, nor even "the head to the feet, I have no need of you." Lastly. How are you assured, that the persons before you are dogs or swine? Judge them not, until you have tried. "How knowest thou, O man, but thou mayest gain thy brother," but thou mayest, under God, save his soul from death. When he spurns thy love, and blasphemes the good word, then it is time to give him up to God.

8. "We have tried; we have laboured to reform sinners; and what did it avail? On many we could make no impression at all: and if some were changed for a while, yet their goodness was but as the morning dew, and they were soon as bad, nay, worse than ever: so that we only hurt them, and ourselves too; for our minds were hurried and discomposed,—perhaps filled with anger instead of love; therefore we had better have kept our religion to ourselves."

It is very possible this fact also may be true; that you have tried to do good, and have not succeeded; yea, that those who seemed reformed, relapsed into sin, and their last state was worse than the first. And what marvel? Is the servant above his Master? But how often did He strive to save sinners, and they would not hear; or, when they had followed him awhile, they turned back as a dog to his vomit! But he did not therefore desist from striving to do good: no more should you, whatever your success be. It is your part to do as you are commanded: the event is in the hand of God. You are not accountable for this: leave it to him who orders all things well. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper." (Eccles. xi. 6.)

But the trial hurries and frets your own soul. Perhaps it did so for this very reason, because you thought you was accountable for the event, which no man is.

nor indeed can be;—or perhaps, because you was off your guard; you was not watchful over your own spirit. But this is no reason for disobeying God. Try again, but try more warily than before. Do good (as you forgive) “not seven times only, but until seventy times seven.” Only be wiser by experience: attempt it every time more cautiously than before. Be more humbled before God, more deeply convinced that of yourself you can do nothing. Be more jealous over your own spirit; more gentle, and watchful unto prayer. Thus “cast your bread upon the waters, and you shall find it again after many days.”

IV. 1. Notwithstanding all these plausible pretences for hiding it, “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” This is the practical application which our Lord himself makes of the foregoing considerations.

“Let your light so shine:”—your lowliness of heart, your gentleness, and meekness of wisdom; your serious, weighty concern for the things of eternity, and sorrow for the sins and miseries of men; your earnest desire of universal holiness, and full happiness in God; your tender good-will to all mankind, and fervent love to your supreme Benefactor. Endeavour not to conceal this light, wherewith God hath enlightened your soul; but let it shine before men, before all with whom you are, in the whole tenor of your conversation. Let it shine still more eminently in your actions, in your doing all possible good to all men; and in your suffering for righteousness' sake, while you “rejoice and are exceeding glad, knowing that great is your reward in heaven.”

2. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works;”—so far let a Christian be from ever designing or desiring to conceal his religion! On the contrary, let it be your desire, not to conceal it; not to put the light under a bushel. Let it be your care to place it “on a candlestick, that it may give light to

all that are in the house." Only take heed, not to seek your own praise herein, not to desire any honour to yourselves. But let it be your sole aim, that all who see your good works may "glorify your Father which is in heaven."

3. Be this your one ultimate end in all things. With this view, be plain, open, undisguised. Let your love be without dissimulation: why should you hide fair, disinterested love? Let there be no guile found in your mouth: let your words be the genuine picture of your heart. Let there be no darkness or reservedness in your conversation, no disguise in your behaviour. Leave this to those who have other designs in view; designs which will not bear the light. Be ye artless and simple to all mankind; that all may see the grace of God which is in you. And although some will harden their hearts, yet others will take knowledge that ye have been with Jesus, and, by returning themselves to the great Bishop of their souls, "glorify your Father which is in heaven."

4. With this one design, that men may glorify God in you, go on in his name, and in the power of his might. Be not ashamed even to stand alone, so it be in the ways of God. Let the light which is in your heart shine in all good works, both works of piety and works of mercy. And in order to enlarge your ability of doing good, renounce all superfluities. Cut off all unnecessary expense in food, in furniture, in apparel. Be a good steward of every gift of God, even of these his lowest gifts. Cut off all unnecessary expense of time, all needless or useless employments; and "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." In a word, be thou full of faith and love; do good; suffer evil. And herein be thou "steadfast, unmovable;" yea, "always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as thou knowest that thy labour is not in vain in the Lord."

*QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXIV.*

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- Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What is said of the beauty of holiness?  
Ques. 2. (§ 2.) What is here said of doing and suffering?  
Ques. 3. (§ 3.) Who have spoken thus?  
Ques. 4. (§ 4.) What is said of this masterpiece of the wisdom from beneath?  
Ques. 5. (§ 5.) Has our Lord guarded us against this delusion?  
Ques. 6. (I. 1.) What is first to be shown here?  
Ques. 7. (I. 2.) What is said of retirement?  
Ques. 8. (I. 3.) What is said of meekness?  
Ques. 9. (I. 4.) What is the next branch of Christianity?  
Ques. 10. (I. 5.) What is said of conversing only with good men?  
Ques. 11. (I. 6.) Are we permitted to have commerce with the world?  
Ques. 12. (I. 7.) Without this would our Christian character be complete?  
Ques. 13. (I. 8.) To what end should we diligently labor?  
Ques. 14. (I. 9.) How does God regard those who know him not?  
Ques. 15. (II. 1.) What is said of insensible influence?  
Ques. 16. (II. 2.) To what plausible reasoning has our Lord given a full answer?  
Ques. 17. (II. 3.) Why do men love darkness?  
Ques. 18. (II. 4.) Is it possible to keep our religion secret?  
Ques. 19. (II. 5.) From what words does this plainly appear?

- Ques. 20. (II. 6.) What is said of the divine example?
- Ques. 21. (II. 7.) Notwithstanding the plainness of Scripture, what plausible objections appear?
- Ques. 22. (III. 1.) What is the third thing proposed?
- Ques. 23. (III. 2.) What second objection is offered?
- Ques. 24. (III. 3.) What is said of following after charity?
- Ques. 25. (III. 4.) What objection is here mentioned?
- Ques. 26. (III. 5.) What is contemplation said to be?
- Ques. 27. (III. 6.) What grand objection is still behind?
- Ques. 28. (III. 7.) What else do they affirm?
- Ques. 29. (III. 8.) What is said of the failure to reform sinners?
- Ques. 30. (IV. 1.) Notwithstanding these objections, what is our duty?
- Ques. 31. (IV. 2.) What is said of the light here?
- Ques. 32. (IV. 3.) What advice is here given?
- Ques. 33. (IV. 4.) How does the sermon conclude?

## SERMON XXV

### ANALYSIS.

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I. CHRIST accused of introducing a new religion. Why this appeared to the Jews to be the case. Some might even hope that it was so. But our Lord refutes this, first by showing that he came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law. The law was completed, and the handwriting of ordinances nailed to the cross. The moral law—the Ten Commandments—not taken away. His own obedience not the full meaning of his words. He came to remove all darkness and obscurity, to make plain the truth, and to establish a religion as old as the creation.

II. Our Lord's declaration. Meaning of the words "jot" and "tittle." All things must be fulfilled. The poor evasion that Christ has fulfilled all the law, and therefore it is done away. No contrariety between the law and the gospel, but the closest connection. The law makes way for and points to the gospel. The pretensions of those who have undertaken to supersede the commands of God.

III. The breaking of the least of the commandments of God. Those who make void the law reproach Christ. The term "these commandments" are equivalent for the law and the prophets. Keeping the whole law and offending in one point only. Obedience to all commandments required. Example teaches as well as precept. The drunkard advocates drunkenness, and so the Sabbath-breaker. What is meant by the words "he shall be least in the kingdom of heaven." The fearful penalty of those who, being teachers, professing to be sent from God, yet by precept and example

breaking the commandments of God. These arranged in several classes. Living in willful, habitual sin. Those who lead a good-natured, harmless life. Above all, those who speak evil of the law itself. The surprising delusion of some of these. The faith of God's elect of high esteem, but only that is true faith which works by love.

IV. There is no other way to the kingdom of heaven. All others are ways of destruction. The office and employment of the scribes. The Pharisees and their origin. Many of the scribes belonged to this sect. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees described. Compared with the requirements of the Christian religion.

## SERMON XXV.

### UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

#### DISCOURSE V.

- "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*
- "For verily, I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*
- "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do, and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*
- "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."—MATT. v. 17-20.*

1. AMONG the multitude of reproaches which fell upon Him who "was despised and rejected of men," it could not fail to be one, that he was a teacher of novelties, an introducer of a *new religion*. This might be affirmed with the more colour, because many of the expressions he had used were not common among the Jews: either they did not use them at all, or not in the same sense, not in so full and strong a meaning. Add to this, that the worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" must always appear a new religion to those who have hitherto known nothing but outside worship, nothing but the "form of godliness."

2. And it is not improbable, some might hope it was so; that he was abolishing the old religion, and bring

ing in another,—one which, they might flatter themselves, would be an easier way to heaven. But our Lord refutes, in these words, both the vain hopes of the one, and the groundless calumnies of the other.

I shall consider them in the same order as they lie, taking each verse for a distinct head of discourse.

I. 1. And first, “think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”

The ritual or ceremonial law, delivered by Moses to the children of Israel, containing all the injunctions and ordinances which related to the old sacrifices and service of the temple, our Lord indeed did come to destroy, to dissolve and utterly abolish. To this bear all the apostles witness; not only Barnabas and Paul, who vehemently withstood those who taught that Christians ‘ought to keep the law of Moses;’ (Acts xv. 5;)—not only St. Peter, who termed the insisting on this, on the observance of the ritual law, a “tempting God,” and “putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers,” saith he, “nor we, were able to bear;”—but all the apostles, elders, and brethren, being assembled with one accord, (verse 22,) declared, that to command them to keep this law, was to “subvert their souls;” and that “it seemed good to the Holy Ghost” and to them, to lay no such burden upon them. This “hand-writing of ordinances our Lord did blot out, take away, and nail to his cross.” (Verse 28.)

2. But the moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the prophets, he did not take away. It was not the design of his coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken, which “stands fast as the faithful witness in heaven.” The moral stands on an entirely different foundation from the ceremonial or ritual law, which was only designed for a temporary restraint upon a disobedient and stiffnecked people; whereas this was from the beginning of the world, being “written not on tables of

stone," but on the hearts of all the children of men, when they came out of the hands of the Creator. And, however the letters once wrote by the finger of God are now in a great measure defaced by sin, yet can they not wholly be blotted out, while we have any consciousness of good and evil. Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages; as not depending either on time or place, or any other circumstances liable to change, but on the nature of God, and the nature of man, and their unchangeable relation to each other.

3. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." Some have conceived our Lord to mean,—I am come to fulfil this, by my entire and perfect obedience to it. And it cannot be doubted but he did, in this sense, fulfil every part of it. But this does not appear to be what he intends here, being foreign to the scope of his present discourse. Without question, his meaning in this place is, (consistently with all that goes before and follows after,)—I am come to establish it in its fulness, in spite of all the glosses of men: I am come to place in a full and clear view whatsoever was dark or obscure therein: I am come to declare the true and full import of every part of it; to show the length and breadth, the entire extent, of every commandment contained therein, and the height and depth, the inconceivable purity and spirituality, of it in all its branches.

4. And this our Lord has abundantly performed in the preceding and subsequent parts of the discourse before us; in which he has not introduced a new religion into the world, but the same which was from the beginning; a religion the substance of which is, without question, as old as the creation, being coeval with man, and having proceeded from God at the very time when "man became a living soul;" (*the substance*, I say; for some circumstances of it now relate to man as a fallen creature; )—a religion witnessed to both by the law and by the prophets, in all succeeding generations. Yet

was it never so fully explained, nor so thoroughly understood, till the great Author of it himself condescended to give mankind this authentic comment on all the essential branches of it; at the same time declaring it should never be changed, but remain in force to the end of the world.

II. 1. "For verily I say unto you," (a solemn preface, which denotes both the importance and certainty of what is spoken,) "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

"One jot:"—it is literally, *not one iota*, not the most inconsiderable vowel. "Or one tittle," *μια κεραια*,—one corner or point of a consonant. It is a proverbial expression, which signifies that no one commandment contained in the moral law, nor the least part of any one, however inconsiderable it might seem, should ever be disannulled.

"Shall in no wise pass from the law:" *ου μη παρελθη απο του νομου*. The double negative, here used, strengthens the sense, so as to admit of no contradiction: and the word *παρελθη*, it may be observed, is not barely *future*, declaring what *will* be; but has likewise the force of an imperative, ordering what *shall* be. It is a word of authority, expressing the sovereign will and power of Him that spake; of Him whose word is the law of heaven and earth, and stands fast for ever and ever.

"One jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass, till heaven and earth pass;" or, as it is expressed immediately after, *ως αν παντα γενηται*,—*till all* (or rather *all things*) *be fulfilled*, till the consummation of all things. Here is therefore no room for that poor evasion, (with which some have delighted themselves greatly,) that "no part of the law was to pass away, till *all the law* was fulfilled: but it has been fulfilled by Christ; and therefore now must pass, for the gospel to be established." Not so; the word *all* does not mean all the law, but all things in the universe; as neither has the term *fulfilled* any

reference to the law, but to all things in heaven and earth.

2. From all this we may learn, that there is no contrariety at all between the law and the gospel; that there is no need for the law to pass away, in order to the establishing the gospel. Indeed, neither of them supersedes the other, but they agree perfectly well together. Yea, the very same words, considered in different respects, are parts both of the law and of the gospel: if they are considered as commandments, they are parts of the law; if as promises, of the gospel. Thus, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," when considered as a commandment, is a branch of the law: when regarded as a promise, is an essential part of the gospel;—the gospel being no other than the commands of the law, proposed by way of promise. Accordingly, poverty of spirit, purity of heart, and whatever else is enjoined in the holy law of God, are no other, when viewed in a gospel light, than so many great and precious promises.

3. There is, therefore, the closest connection that can be conceived between the law and the gospel. On the one hand, the law continually makes way for, and points us to, the gospel; on the other, the gospel continually leads us to a more exact fulfilling of the law. The law, for instance, requires us to love God, to love our neighbour, to be meek, humble, or holy: we feel that we are not sufficient for these things; yea, that "with man this is impossible." But we see a promise of God, to give us that love, and to make us humble, meek, and holy: we lay hold of this gospel, of these glad tidings: it is done unto us according to our faith; and "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us," through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

We may yet further observe, that every command in holy writ is only a covered promise. For by that solemn declaration, "This is the covenant I will make after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws in your minds, and write them in your hearts," God hath

engaged to give whatsoever he commands. Does he command us then to "pray without ceasing?" to "rejoice evermore?" to be "holy as He is holy?" It is enough: he will work in us this very thing: it shall be unto us according to his word.

4. But if these things are so, we cannot be at a loss what to think of those who, in all ages of the church, have undertaken to change or supersede some commands of God, as they professed, by the peculiar direction of his Spirit. Christ has here given us an infallible rule, whereby to judge of all such pretensions. Christianity, as it includes the whole moral law of God, both by way of injunction and of promise, if we will hear him, is designed of God to be the last of all his dispensations. There is no other to come after this. This is to endure till the consummation of all things. Of consequence, all such new revelations are of Satan, and not of God; and all pretences to another more perfect dispensation fall to the ground of course. "Heaven and earth shall pass away;" but *this* word "shall not pass away."

III. 1. "Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

Who, what are they, that make the preaching of the law a character of reproach? Do they not see on whom the reproach must fall,—on whose head it must light at last? Whosoever on this ground despiseth us, despiseth Him that sent us. For did ever any man preach the law like Him, even when he came not to condemn, but to save the world; when he came purposely to "bring life and immortality to light through the gospel?" Can any preach the law more expressly, more rigorously, than Christ does in these words? And who is he that shall amend them? Who is he that shall instruct the Son of God how to preach? Who will teach him a better way of delivering the message which he hath received of the Father?

2 "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments," or one of the least of these commandments. "These commandments," we may observe, is a term used by our Lord as an equivalent with the law, or the law and the prophets,—which is the same thing, seeing the prophets added nothing to the law, but only declared, explained, or enforced it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments," especially if it be done wilfully or presumptuously:—*one*; for "he that keepeth the whole law, and" thus "offends in one point, is guilty of all;" the wrath of God abideth on him, as surely as if he had broken every one. So that no allowance is made for one darling lust; no reserve for one idol; no excuse for refraining from all besides, and only giving way to one bosom sin. What God demands is, an entire obedience; we are to have an eye to all his commandments; otherwise we lose all the labour we take in keeping some, and our poor souls for ever and ever.

"One of these least," or one of the least of these commandments. Here is another excuse cut off, whereby many, who cannot deceive God, miserably deceive their own souls. "This sin," saith the sinner, "is it not a little one? Will not the Lord spare me in this thing? Surely he will not be extreme to mark this, since I do not offend in the greater matters of the law." Vain hope! Speaking after the manner of men, we may term these great, and those little commandments; but, in reality, they are not so. If we use propriety of speech, there is no such thing as a little sin; every sin being a transgression of the holy and perfect law, and an affront on the great Majesty of heaven.

3. "And shall teach men so." In some sense it may be said, that whosoever openly breaks any commandment teaches others to do the same; for example speaks, and many times louder than precept. In this sense, it is apparent, every open drunkard is a teacher of drunkenness; every Sabbath-breaker is constantly teaching

his neighbour to profane the day of the Lord. But this is not all; an habitual breaker of the law is seldom content to stop here: he generally teaches other men to do so too, by word as well as example; especially when he hardens his neck, and hateth to be reproved. Such a sinner soon commences an advocate for sin; he defends what he is resolved not to forsake; he excuses the sin which he will not leave, and thus directly teaches every sin which he commits.

"He shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven;"—that is, shall have no part therein. He is a stranger to the kingdom of heaven which is on earth; he hath no portion in that inheritance; no share of that "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Nor, by consequence, can he have any part in the glory which shall be revealed.

4. But if those who even thus break and teach others to break, "one of the least of these commandments, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven," shall have no part in the kingdom of Christ and of God; if even these shall be cast into "outer darkness, where is wailing and gnashing of teeth;" then where will they appear whom our Lord chiefly and primarily intends in these words,—they who, bearing the character of teachers sent from God, do nevertheless themselves break his commandments; yea, and openly teach others so to do; being corrupt both in life and doctrine?

5. These are of several sorts. Of the first sort are they who live in some wilful, habitual sin. Now, if an ordinary sinner teaches by his example, how much more a sinful minister,—even if he does not attempt to defend, excuse, or extenuate his sin! If he does, he is a murderer indeed; yea, the murderer-general of his congregation. He peoples the regions of death. He is the choicest instrument of the prince of darkness. When he goes hence, "hell from beneath is moved to meet him at his coming." Nor can he sink into the bottomless pit, without dragging a multitude after him.

6. Next to these are the good-natured, good sort of

men; who live an easy, harmless life, neither troubling themselves with outward sin, nor with inward holiness; men who are remarkable neither one way nor the other,—neither for religion nor irreligion; who are very regular both in public and private, but do not pretend to be any stricter than their neighbours. A minister of this kind breaks, not one, or a few only, of the least commandments of God; but all the great and weighty branches of his law, which relate to the power of godliness, and all that require us to “pass the time of our sojourning in fear,” to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling,” to have our “loins always girt, and our lights burning,” to “strive” or agonize “to enter in at the strait gate.” And he *teaches men so*, by the whole form of his life, and the general tenor of his preaching, which uniformly tends to soothe those in their pleasing dream who imagine themselves Christians, and are not; to persuade all who attend upon his ministry to sleep on and take their rest. No marvel, therefore, if both he, and they that follow him, wake together in everlasting burnings!

7. But above all these, in the highest rank of the enemies of the gospel of Christ are they who openly and explicitly “judge the law” itself, and “speak evil of the law;” who teach men to break (*λυσαι*, to *dissolve*, to *loose*, to *untie*, the obligation of) not one only, whether of the least or of the greatest, but all the commandments at a stroke; who teach without any cover, in so many words,—“What did our Lord do with the law? He abolished it. There is but one duty, which is that of believing. All commands are unfit for our times. From any demand of the law, no man is obliged now to go one step, or give away one farthing, to eat or omit one morsel.” This is indeed carrying matters with a high hand; this is withstanding our Lord to the face, and telling him that he understood not how to deliver the message on which he was sent. O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge! Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!

8. The most surprising of all the circumstances that attend this strong delusion is, that they who are given up to it really believe that they honour Christ by overthrowing his law, and that they are magnifying his office, while they are destroying his doctrine. Yea, they honour him just as Judas did, when he said, "Hail, Master!" and kissed him. And he may as justly say to every one of them, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" It is no other than betraying him with a kiss, to talk of his blood, and take away his crown; to set light by any part of his law, under pretence of advancing his gospel. Nor, indeed, can any one escape this charge, who preaches faith in any such a manner as either directly or indirectly tends to set aside any branch of obedience; who preaches Christ so as to disannul, or weaken in any wise, the least of the commandments of God.

9. It is impossible, indeed, to have too high an esteem for "the faith of God's elect." And we must all declare, "By grace ye are saved through faith; not of works, lest any man should boast." We must cry aloud to every penitent sinner, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But, at the same time, we must take care to let all men know we esteem no faith but that which worketh by love; and that we are not saved by faith, unless so far as we are delivered from the power as well as the guilt of sin. And when we say, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved," we do not mean, "Believe, and thou shalt step from sin to heaven, without any holiness coming between; faith supplying the place of holiness;" but, "Believe, and thou shalt be holy; believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt have peace and power together: thou shalt have power from Him in whom thou believest, to trample sin under thy feet; power to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and to serve him with all thy strength: thou shalt have power, 'by patient continuance in well doing, to seek for glory, and honour, and immortality; thou shalt both do and teach all the commandments of

God, from the least even to the greatest: thou shalt teach them by thy life as well as thy words, and so 'be called great in the kingdom of heaven.' "

IV. 1. Whatever other way we teach to the kingdom of heaven, to glory, honour, and immortality, be it called "the way of faith," or by any other name, it is, in truth, the way to destruction. It will not bring a man peace at the last. For thus saith the Lord, "I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

The scribes, mentioned so often in the New Testament, as some of the most constant and vehement opposers of our Lord, were not secretaries, or men employed in writing only, as that term might incline us to believe. Neither were they lawyers, in our common sense of the word; although the word *νομικοι* is so rendered in our translation. Their employment had no affinity at all to that of a lawyer among us. They were conversant with the laws of God, and not with the laws of man. These were their study; it was their proper and peculiar business to read and expound the law and the prophets; particularly in the synagogues. They were the ordinary, stated preachers among the Jews. So that if the sense of the original word was attended to, we might render it, "the divines." For these were the men who made divinity their profession: and they were generally (as their name literally imports) men of letters; men of the greatest account for learning that were then in the Jewish nation.

2. The Pharisees were a very ancient sect, or body of men, among the Jews; originally so called from the Hebrew word פְּרִישׁ—which signifies to *separate* or *divide*. Not that they made any formal separation from, or division in, the national church: they were only distinguished from others by greater strictness of life, by more exactness of conversation. For they were zealous of the law in the minutest points; paying tithes of mint,

anisé, and cummin : and hence they were had in honour of all the people, and generally esteemed the best of men.

Many of the scribes were of the sect of the Pharisees. Thus St. Paul himself, who was educated for a scribe, first at the university of Tarsus, and after that in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, (one of the most learned scribes or doctors of the law that were then in the nation,) declares of himself before the council, "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee;" (Acts xxiii. 6;) and before King Agrippa, "After the strictest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee." (xxvi. 5.) And the whole body of the scribes generally esteemed and acted in concert with the Pharisees. Hence we find our Saviour so frequently coupling them together, as coming in many respects under the same consideration. In this place they seem to be mentioned together as the most eminent professors of religion; the former of whom were accounted the wisest,—the latter, the holiest of men.

3. What "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" really was, it is not difficult to determine. Our Lord has preserved an authentic account which one of them gave of himself: and he is clear and full in describing his own righteousness; and cannot be supposed to have omitted any part of it. He went up indeed "into the temple to pray;" but was so intent upon his own virtues, that he forgot the design upon which he came. For it is remarkable, he does not properly pray at all: he only tells God how wise and good he was. "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." His righteousness therefore consisted of three parts: first, saith he, "I am not as other men are;" I am not an extortioner, not unjust, not an adulterer; not "even as this publican:" secondly, "I fast twice in the week:" and, thirdly, "I give tithes of all that I possess."

"I am not as other men are." This is not a small

point It is not every man that can say this. It is as if he had said, "I do not suffer myself to be carried away by that great torrent, custom. I live not by custom, but by reason; not by the examples of men, but by the word of God. I am not an extortioner, not unjust, not an adulterer; however common these sins are, even among those who are called the people of God; (extortion, in particular,—a kind of legal injustice, not punishable by any human law, the making gain of another's ignorance or necessity,—having filled every corner of the land;) nor even as this publican; not guilty of any open or presumptuous sin; not an outward sinner; but a fair, honest man, of blameless life and conversation."

4. "I fast twice in the week." There is more implied in this than we may at first be sensible of. All the stricter Pharisees observed the weekly fasts; namely, every Monday and Thursday. On the former day, they fasted in memory of Moses receiving on that day (as their tradition taught) the two tables of stone written by the finger of God; on the latter, in memory of his casting them out of his hand, when he saw the people dancing round the golden calf. On these days, they took no sustenance at all till three in the afternoon, the hour at which they began to offer up the evening sacrifice in the temple. Till that hour, it was their custom to remain in the temple, in some of the corners, apartments, or courts thereof; that they might be ready to assist at all the sacrifices, and to join in all the public prayers. The time between they were accustomed to employ, partly in private addresses to God, partly in searching the Scriptures, in reading the law and the prophets, and in meditating thereon. Thus much is implied in, "I fast twice in the week;" the second branch of the righteousness of a Pharisee.

5. "I give tithes of all that I possess." This the Pharisees did with the utmost exactness. They would not except the most inconsiderable thing; no, not mint, anise, and cummin. They would not keep back the

least point of what they believed properly to belong to God; but gave a full tenth of their whole substance yearly, and of all their increase, whatsoever it was.

Yea, the stricter Pharisees, (as has been often observed by those who are versed in the ancient Jewish writings,) not content with giving one-tenth of their substance to God in his priests and Levites, gave another tenth to God in the poor, and that continually. They gave the same proportion of all they had in alms, as they were accustomed to give in tithes. And this likewise they adjusted with the utmost exactness: that they might not keep back any part, but might fully render unto God the things which were God's, as they accounted this to be. So that, upon the whole, they gave away, from year to year, an entire fifth of all that they possessed.

6. This was "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees;" a righteousness which, in many respects, went far beyond the conception which many have been accustomed to entertain concerning it. But perhaps it will be said, "It was all false and feigned; for they were all a company of hypocrites." Some of them doubtless were; men who had really no religion at all, no fear of God, or desire to please him; who had no concern for the honour that cometh of God, but only for the praise of men. And these are they whom our Lord so severely condemns, so sharply reproves, on many occasions. But we must not suppose, because many Pharisees were hypocrites, therefore all were so. Nor indeed is hypocrisy by any means essential to the character of a Pharisee. This is not the distinguishing mark of their sect. It is rather this, according to our Lord's account, "They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others." This is their genuine badge. But the Pharisee of this kind cannot be a hypocrite. He must be, in the common sense, sincere; otherwise he could not "trust in himself that he is righteous." The man who was here commending himself to God, unquestionably thought himself righteous. Consequently he was no hypocrite; he was not

conscious to himself of any insincerity. He now spoke to God just what he thought; namely, that he was abundantly better than other men.

But the example of St. Paul, were there no other, is sufficient to put this out of all question. He could not only say, when he was a Christian, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men;" (Acts xxiv. 16;) but even concerning the time when he was a Pharisee, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." (xxiii. 1.) He was therefore sincere when he was a Pharisee, as well as when he was a Christian. He was no more a hypocrite when he persecuted the church, than when he preached the faith which once he persecuted. Let this then be added to "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees,"—a sincere belief that they are righteous, and in all things "doing God service."

7. And yet, "Except your righteousness," saith our Lord, "shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." A solemn and weighty declaration, and which it behoves all who are called by the name of Christ seriously and deeply to consider. But before we inquire how our righteousness may exceed theirs, let us examine whether at present we come up to it.

First. A Pharisee was "not as other men are." In externals he was singularly good. Are we so? Do we dare to be singular at all? Do we not rather swim with the stream? Do we not many times dispense with religion and reason together, because we would not *look particular*? Are we not often more afraid of being out of the fashion, than being out of the way of salvation? Have we courage to stem the tide?—to run counter to the world?—"to obey God rather than man?" Otherwise, the Pharisee leaves us behind at the very first step. It is well if we overtake him any more.

But to come closer. Can we use his first plea with God?—which is, in substance, "I do no harm: I live

in no outward sin: I do nothing for which my own heart condemns me." Do you not? Are you sure of that? Do you live in no practice for which your own heart condemns you? If you are not an adulterer, if you are not unchaste, either in word or deed, are you not unjust? The grand measure of justice, as well as of mercy, is, "Do unto others as thou wouldest they should do unto thee." Do you walk by this rule? Do you never do unto any what you would not they should do unto you? Nay, are you not grossly unjust? Are you not an extortioner? Do you not make a gain of any one's ignorance or necessity; neither in buying nor selling? Suppose you were engaged in trade: do you demand, do you receive, no more than the real value of what you sell? Do you demand, do you receive, no more of the ignorant than of the knowing,—of a little child, than of an experienced trader? If you do, why does not your heart condemn you? You are a bare-faced extortioner! Do you demand no more than the usual price of goods of any who is in pressing want,—who must have, and that without delay, the things which you only can furnish him with? If you do, this also is flat extortion. Indeed you do not come up to the righteousness of a Pharisee.

8. A Pharisee, secondly, (to express his sense in our common way,) used all the means of grace. As he fasted often and much, twice in every week, so he attended all the sacrifices. He was constant in public and private prayer, and in reading and hearing the Scriptures. Do you go as far as this? Do you fast much and often?—twice in the week? I fear not. Once at least,—“on all Fridays in the year?” (So our Church clearly and peremptorily enjoins all her members to do; to observe all these, as well as the vigils and the forty days of Lent, as days of fasting or abstinence.) Do you fast twice in the year? I am afraid some among us cannot plead even this! Do you neglect no opportunity of attending and partaking of the Christian sacrifice? How many are they who call themselves

Christians, and yet are utterly regardless of it,—yet do not eat of that bread, or drink of that cup, for months perhaps years, together! Do you, every day, either hear the Scriptures, or read them, and meditate thereon? Do you join in prayer with the great congregation, daily, if you have opportunity; if not, whenever you can; particularly on that day which you “remember to keep it holy?” Do you strive to *make* opportunities? Are you glad when they say unto you, “We will go into the house of the Lord?” Are you zealous of, and diligent in, private prayer? Do you suffer no day to pass without it? Rather, are not some of you so far from spending therein (with the Pharisee) several hours in one day, that you think one hour full enough, if not too much? Do you spend an hour in a day, or in a week, in praying to your Father which is in secret? yea, an hour in a month? Have you spent one hour together in private prayer ever since you was born? Ah, poor Christian! Shall not the Pharisee rise up in the judgment against thee and condemn thee? His righteousness is as far above thine as the heaven is above the earth!

9. The Pharisee, thirdly, paid tithes and gave alms of all that he possessed. And in how ample a manner! So that he was (as we phrase it) “a man that did much good.” Do we come up to him here? Which of us is so abundant as he was in good works? Which of us gives a fifth of all his substance to God, both of the principal and of the increase? Who of us, out of (suppose) an hundred pounds a year, gives twenty to God and the poor; out of fifty, ten; and so in a larger or smaller proportion? When shall our righteousness, in using all the means of grace, in attending all the ordinances of God, in avoiding evil and doing good, equal at least the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees?

10. Although, if it only equalled theirs, what would that profit? “For verily I say unto you, Except your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the

scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." But how can it exceed theirs? Wherein does the righteousness of a Christian exceed that of a scribe or Pharisee? Christian righteousness exceeds theirs, first, in the extent of it. Most of the Pharisees, though they were rigorously exact in many things, yet were emboldened, by the traditions of the elders, to dispense with others of equal importance. Thus, they were extremely punctual in keeping the fourth commandment,—they would not even rub an ear of corn on the Sabbath-day; but not at all in keeping the third,—making little account of light, or even false, swearing. So that their righteousness was partial; whereas the righteousness of a real Christian is universal. He does not observe one, or some parts of the law of God, and neglect the rest; but keeps all his commandments, loves them all, values them above gold or precious stones.

11. It may be, indeed, that some of the scribes and Pharisees endeavoured to keep all the commandments, and consequently were, as touching the righteousness of the law, that is, according to the letter of it, blameless. But still the righteousness of a Christian exceeds all this righteousness of a scribe or Pharisee, by fulfilling the spirit as well as the letter of the law; by inward as well as outward obedience. In this, in the spirituality of it, it admits of no comparison. This is the point which our Lord has so largely proved, in the whole tenor of this discourse. Their righteousness was external only; Christian righteousness is in the inner man. The Pharisee "cleansed the outside of the cup and the platter;" the Christian is clean within. The Pharisee laboured to present God with a good life; the Christian with a holy heart. The one shook off the leaves, perhaps the fruits, of sin: the other "lays the axe to the root;" as not being content with the outward form of godliness, how exact soever it be, unless the life, the Spirit, the power of God unto salvation be felt in the inmost soul

Thus to do no harm, to do good, to attend the ordinances of God, (the righteousness of a Pharisee,) are all external; whereas, on the contrary, poverty of spirit, mourning, meekness, hunger and thirst after righteousness, the love of our neighbour, and purity of heart, (the righteousness of a Christian,) are all internal. And even peace-making, (or doing good,) and suffering for righteousness' sake, stand entitled to the blessings annexed to them, only as they imply these inward dispositions as they spring from, exercise, and confirm them. So that whereas the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was external only, it may be said, in some sense, that the righteousness of a Christian is internal only: all his actions and sufferings being as nothing in themselves, being estimated before God only by the tempers from which they spring.

12. Whosoever therefore thou art, who bearest the holy and venerable name of a Christian, see, first, that thy righteousness fall not short of the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Be not thou "as other men are!" "Dare to stand alone;" to be "against example, singularly good." If thou "follow a multitude" at all, it must be "to do evil." Let not custom or fashion be thy guide, but reason and religion. The practice of others is nothing to thee: "Every man must give an account of himself to God." Indeed, if thou canst save the soul of another, do; but at least save one,—thy own. Walk not in the path of death because it is broad and many walk therein. Nay, by this very token thou mayest know it. Is the way wherein thou now walkest a broad, well-frequented, fashionable way? Then it infallibly leads to destruction. Oh, be not thou "damned for company!" Cease from evil: fly from sin as from the face of a serpent! At least, do no harm. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." Be not thou found in that number. Touching outward sins, surely the grace of God is even now sufficient for thee. "Herein," at least, "exercise thyself to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men."

Secondly. Let not thy righteousness fall short of theirs with regard to the ordinances of God. If thy labour or bodily strength will not allow of thy fasting twice in the week, however, deal faithfully with thy own soul, and fast as often as thy strength will permit. Omit no public, no private opportunity of pouring out thy soul in prayer. Neglect no occasion of eating that bread and drinking that cup which is the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Be diligent in searching the Scriptures; read as thou mayest, and meditate therein day and night. Rejoice to embrace every opportunity of hearing "the word of reconciliation" declared by the "ambassadors of Christ," the "stewards of the mysteries of God." In using all the means of grace, in a constant and careful attendance on every ordinance of God, live up to (at least till thou canst go beyond) "the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees."

Thirdly. Fall not short of a Pharisee in doing good. Give alms of all thou dost possess. Is any hungry? Feed him. Is he athirst? Give him drink. Naked? Cover him with a garment. If thou hast this world's goods, do not limit thy beneficence to a scanty proportion. Be merciful to the uttermost of thy power. Why not even as this Pharisee? Now "make thyself friends," while the time is, "of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when thou failest," when this earthly tabernacle is dissolved, they "may receive thee into everlasting habitations."

13. But rest not here. Let thy righteousness "exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." Be not thou content to "keep the whole law, and offend in one point." Hold thou fast all His commandments, and all "false ways do thou utterly abhor." Do all the things whatsoever He hath commanded, and that with all thy might. Thou canst do all things through Christ strengthening thee; though without him thou canst do nothing.

Above all, let thy righteousness exceed theirs in

the purity and spirituality of it. What is the exactest form of religion to thee? the most perfect outside righteousness? Go thou higher and deeper than all this! Let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Be thou poor in spirit; little, and base, and mean, and vile in thy own eyes; amazed and humbled to the dust at the love of God which is in Christ Jesus thy Lord! Be serious: let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and works be such as flows from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men, just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory or everlasting burnings! Be meek: let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, longsuffering toward all men; at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for God, the living God, longing to wake up after his likeness, and to be satisfied with it. Be thou a lover of God, and of all mankind. In this spirit, do and suffer all things. Thus "exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," and thou shalt be "called great in the kingdom of heaven."

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## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXV.

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Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What special charge was brought against Christ?

Ques. 2. (§ 2.) Was this hoped by any?

Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What is the first saying of Christ quoted?

Ques. 4. (I. 2.) Did he take away the moral law?

Ques. 5. (I. 3.) If not taken away, was it established? What is said of his mission?

Ques. 6. (I. 4.) Where is this performed?

Ques. 7. (II. 1.) What is the meaning of "Verily, I say unto you?"

Ques. 8. (II. 2.) What do we learn from all this?

Ques. 9. (II. 3.) What is said of the connection between the law and the gospel?

Ques. 10. (II. 4.) What is said of those who change or supersede the commandments of God?

Ques. 11. (III. 1.) Whom do they reproach?

Ques. 12. (III. 2.) What is meant by "these commandments?"

Ques. 13. (III. 2.) Is there a little sin?

Ques. 14. (III. 3.) How do men teach others by example? Does the drunkard teach drunkenness?

Ques. 15. (III. 4.) What is meant by "least in the kingdom?"

Ques. 16. (III. 5.) What is the first class mentioned?

Ques. 17. (III. 6.) Who are next to these?

Ques. 18. (III. 7.) Who stand in the first rank?

Ques. 19. (III. 8.) What is the most surprising circumstance?

Ques. 20. (III. 9.) What is said of "the faith of the elect?"

Ques. 21. (IV. 1.) Is there any other way to the kingdom?

Ques. 22. (IV. 1.) Who were the scribes?

Ques. 23. (IV. 2.) Who were the Pharisees?

Ques. 24. (IV. 3.) What was their righteousness? What three assertions does the Pharisee make?

Ques. 25. (IV. 4.) What is said of his fasting?

Ques. 26. (IV. 5.) His giving of tithes?

Ques. 27. (IV. 6.) What is said of this righteousness?

Ques. 28. (IV. 7.) What does our Lord say here?

Ques. 29. (IV. 8.) Did the Pharisee use the means of grace?

Ques. 30. (IV. 9.) What was the character of his charity?

Ques. 31. (IV. 10.) What is said of the righteousness required?

Ques. 32. (IV. 11.) Were any of the scribes and Pharisees sincere?

Ques. 33. (IV. 12.) How does the sermon conclude?

SERMON XXVI.  
ANALYSIS.

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I. INWARD religion already described, our Lord proceeds to show the quality of our actions. How they are made holy and good. Works of mercy. Not to be performed for show or for purposes of self-glorying. The intent to be seen of men forbidden. Calling attention to them by sound of trumpet in any place of public resort. This a common practice among the Jews. The manner of giving prescribed.

II. From works of charity or mercy our Lord proceeds to works of piety. Praying in public places to attract the notice of men. This is a characteristic of the hypocrite. Communion with God in secret. Rewards of a temporal character not to be sought, as these destroy the purity of the intention. Entering into the closet and retiring from the sight of the world reveals the only right spirit. Vain repetitions to be avoided. Abundance of words the fault of the heathen. Not the length of the prayer, but the words without meaning.

III. Observations concerning the Lord's Prayer. It contains all that we can reasonably or innocently pray for. Consists of three parts: The preface, the petitions, and the doxology, or conclusion. The prayer analyzed. "Our Father which art in heaven" is the preface, and lays a general foundation for prayer. The words examined in their order. "Hallowed be thy name," the first of the six petitions. The name of God is God himself. The signification of the Hebrew and Greek terms. "Thy kingdom come," the second petition. Its meaning opened. "Thy will be done on earth

as it is in heaven." The necessary and immediate consequence wherever the kingdom of Christ or God is come. How this will is done in heaven. "Give us this day our daily bread." This is the fourth petition. As the three former petitions are for all mankind, so this is personal, applies to our own wants. What is meant by bread and "daily bread." The words examined in their order. The fifth petition: "And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." This petition explained, and the condition of our forgiveness stated. The sixth petition: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." These words explained. The conclusion of the prayer.

## SERMON XXVI.

## UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

## DISCOURSE VI.

- “Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.
- “Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- “But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.
- “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.
- “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.
- “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.
- “Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
- “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen.

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\* *For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you :*

*“But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—MATT. vi. 1-15.*

1. IN the preceding chapter, our Lord has described inward religion in its various branches. He has laid before us those dispositions of soul which constitute real Christianity; the inward tempers contained in that “holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord;” the affections which, when flowing from their proper fountain, from a living faith in God through Christ Jesus, are intrinsically and essentially good, and acceptable to God. He proceeds to show, in this chapter, how all our actions likewise, even those that are indifferent in their own nature, may be made holy, and good, and acceptable to God by a pure and holy intention. Whatever is done without this, he largely declares, is of no value before God. Whereas, whatever outward works are thus consecrated to God, they are, in his sight, of great price.

2. The necessity of this purity of intention, he shows, first, with regard to those which are usually accounted religious actions, and indeed are such when performed with a right intention. Some of these are commonly termed “works of piety;” the rest “works of charity” or mercy. Of the latter sort, he particularly names almsgiving; of the former, prayer and fasting. But the directions given for these are equally to be applied to every work, whether of charity or mercy.

I. 1. And, first, with regard to works of mercy. “Take heed,” saith he, “that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.” “That ye do not your alms:”—although this only is named, yet is every work of charity included, every thing which we give, or speak, or do, whereby our neighbour may be profited; whereby another man may receive any advantage, either in his body or soul. The feeding the

hungry, the clothing the naked, the entertaining or assisting the stranger, the visiting those that are sick or in prison, the comforting the afflicted, the instructing the ignorant, the reproving the wicked, the exhorting and encouraging the well-doer; and if there be any other work of mercy, it is equally included in this direction.

2. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them."—The thing which is here forbidden is not barely the doing good in the sight of men; this circumstance alone, that others see what we do, makes the action neither worse nor better; but the doing it before men, "to be seen of them," with this view, from this intention only. I say, from this intention only; for this may, in some cases, be a part of our intention; we may design that some of our actions should be seen, and yet they may be acceptable to God. We may intend that our light should shine before men, when our conscience bears us witness in the Holy Ghost, that our ultimate end in designing they should see our good works is, "that they may glorify our Father which is in heaven." But take heed that ye do not the least thing with a view to your own glory; take heed that a regard to the praise of men have no place at all in your works of mercy. If ye seek your own glory, if you have any design to gain the honour that cometh of men, whatever is done with this view is nothing worth; it is not done unto the Lord; he accepteth it not; "ye have no reward" for this "of ur Father which is in heaven."

3. "Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have praise of men."—The word synagogue does not here mean a place of worship, but any place of public resort, such as the market-place, or exchange. It was a common thing among the Jews who were men of large fortunes, particularly among the Pharisees, to cause a trumpet to be sounded before them in the most public parts of the city, when they were about to give any considerable

**alms.** The pretended reason for this was to call the poor together to receive it; but the real design, that they might have praise of men. But be thou not like unto them. Do not thou cause a trumpet to be sounded before thee. Use no ostentation in doing good. Aim at the honour which cometh of God only. They who seek the praise of men have their reward: they shall have no praise of God.

4. "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."—This is a proverbial expression, the meaning of which is,—Do it in as secret a manner as is possible; as secret as is consistent with the doing it at all, (for it must not be left undone; omit no opportunity of doing good, whether secretly or openly,) and with the doing it in the most effectual manner. For here is also an exception to be made: when you are fully persuaded in your own mind, that by your not concealing the good which is done, either you will yourself be enabled, or others excited, to do the more good, then you may not conceal it; then let your light appear, and "shine to all that are in the house." But, unless where the glory of God and the good of mankind oblige you to the contrary, act in as private and unobserved a manner as the nature of the thing will admit:—"that thy alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly;" perhaps in the present world,—many instances of this stand recorded in all ages; but infallibly in the world to come, before the general assembly of men and angels.

II. 1. From works of charity or mercy our Lord proceeds to those which are termed "works of piety." "And when thou prayest," saith he, "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."—"Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are." Hypocrisy, then, or insincerity is the first thing we are to guard against in prayer. Beware not to speak what thou dost not mean. Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to God: all words of prayer

without this are mere hypocrisy. Whenever therefore thou attemptest to pray, see that it be thy one design to commune with God, to lift up thy heart to him, to pour out thy soul before him; not as the hypocrites, who love, or are wont, "to pray standing in the synagogues," the exchange, or market-places, "and in the corners of the streets," wherever the most people are, "that they may be seen of men:" this was the sole design, the motive, and end, of the prayers which they there repeated. "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."—They are to expect none from your Father which is in heaven.

2. But it is not only the having an eye to the praise of men, which cuts us off from any reward in heaven; which leaves us no room to expect the blessing of God upon our works, whether of piety or mercy. Purity of intention is equally destroyed by a view to any temporal reward whatever. If we repeat our prayers, if we attend the public worship of God, if we relieve the poor, with a view to gain or interest, it is not a whit more acceptable to God, than if it were done with a view to praise. Any temporal view, any motive whatever on this side eternity, any design but that of promoting the glory of God, and the happiness of men for God's sake, makes every action, however fair it may appear to men, an abomination unto the Lord.

3. "But when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."—There is a time when thou art openly to glorify God, to pray, and praise him in the great congregation. But when thou desirest more largely and more particularly to make thy requests known unto God, whether it be in the evening, or in the morning, or at noonday, "enter into thy closet, and shut thy door." Use all the privacy thou canst. (Only leave it not undone, whether thou hast any closet, any privacy, or no. Pray to God, if it be possible, when none seeth but he; but if otherwise, pray to God.) Thus "pray to thy Father which is in secret;" pour out all thy heart

before him ; “ and thy Father which seeth in secret, he shall reward thee openly.”

4. “ But when ye pray,” even in secret, “ use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do ;” *μη βαρτολογησθε*. Do not use abundance of words without any meaning. Say not the same thing over and over again ; think not the fruit of your prayers depends on the length of them, like the heathens ; “ for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

The thing here reprov'd is not simply the length, any more than the shortness of our prayers ;—but, first, length without meaning ; speaking much, and meaning little or nothing ; the using (not all repetitions ; for our Lord himself prayed thrice, repeating the same words ; but) “ vain repetitions,” as the heathens did, reciting the names of their gods over and over ; as they do among Christians, (vulgarly so called,) and not among the Papists only, who say over and over the same string of prayers, without ever feeling what they speak :—secondly, the thinking to be heard for our “ much speaking ;” the fancying God measures prayers by their length, and is best pleas'd with those which contain the most words, which sound the longest in his ears. These are such instances of superstition and folly as all who are named by the name of Christ should leave to the heathens, to them on whom the glorious light of the gospel hath never shined.

5. “ Be not ye therefore like unto them.”—Ye who have tasted of the grace of God in Christ Jesus are thoroughly convinc'd “ your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” So that the end of your praying is not to inform God, as though he knew not your wants already ; but rather to inform yourselves ; to fix the sense of those wants more deeply in your hearts, and the sense of your continual dependence on Him who only is able to supply all your wants. It is not so much to move God, who is always more ready to give than you to ask, as to move yourselves, that you may be willing and ready to receive the good things he has prepar'd for you.

III. 1. After having taught the true nature and ends

of prayer, our Lord subjoins an example of it; even that divine form of prayer which seems in this place to be proposed by way of pattern chiefly, as the model and standard of all our prayers: "After this manner therefore pray ye." Whereas, elsewhere he enjoins the use of these very words: "He said unto them, When ye pray, say—" (Luke xi. 2.)

2. We may observe, in general, concerning this divine prayer, first, that it contains all we can reasonably or innocently pray for. There is nothing which we have need to ask of God, nothing which we can ask without offending him, which is not included, either directly or indirectly, in this comprehensive form. Secondly, that it contains all we can reasonably or innocently desire; whatever is for the glory of God, whatever is needful or profitable, not only for ourselves, but for every creature in heaven and earth. And, indeed, our prayers are the proper test of our desires; nothing being fit to have a place in our desires which is not fit to have a place in our prayers; what we may not pray for, neither should we desire. Thirdly, that it contains all our duty to God and man; whatsoever things are pure and holy, whatsoever God requires of the children of men, whatsoever is acceptable in his sight, whatsoever it is whereby we may profit our neighbour, being expressed or implied therein.

3. It consists of three parts,—the preface, the petitions, and the doxology or conclusion. The preface, "Our Father which art in heaven," lays a general foundation for prayer; comprising what we must first know of God, before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us all those tempers with which we are to approach to God, which are most essentially requisite, if we desire either our prayers or our lives should find acceptance with him.

4. "Our Father:"—if he is a Father, then he is good, then he is loving to his children. And here is the first and great reason for prayer. God is willing to bless; let us ask for a blessing. "Our Father;"—our Creator; the Author of our being; he who raised us

from the dust of the earth ; who breathed into us the breath of life, and we became living souls. But if he made us, let us ask, and he will not withhold any good thing from the work of his own hands. "Our Father;"—our Preserver ; who, day by day, sustains the life he has given ; of whose continuing love we now and every moment receive life, and breath, and all things. So much the more boldly let us come to him, and we shall "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Above all, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all that believe in him ; who justifies us "freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus;" who hath "blotted out all our sins, and healed all our infirmities ;" who hath received us for his own children, by adoption and grace ; and, "because" we "are sons, hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into" our "hearts, crying, Abba, Father;" who "hath begotten us again of incorruptible seed," and "created us anew in Christ Jesus." Therefore we know that he heareth us always ; therefore we pray to him without ceasing. We pray, because we love ; and "we love him, because he first loved us."

5. "Our Father :"—not *mine* only who now cry unto him, but *ours* in the most extensive sense. The God and "Father of the spirits of all flesh ;" the Father of angels and men : so the very heathens acknowledge him to be the Πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε. The Father of the universe, of all the families both in heaven and earth. Therefore, with him, there is no respect of persons. He loveth all that he hath made. "He is loving unto every man, and his mercy is over all his works." And the Lord's delight is in them that fear him and put their trust in his mercy ; in them that trust in him through the Son of his love, knowing they are "accepted in the Beloved." But "if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another ;" yea, all mankind ; seeing "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," even to die the death, that they "might not perish, but have everlasting life."

6. "Which art in heaven :"—high and lifted up, God over all, blessed for ever ; who, sitting on the circle of

the heavens, beholdeth all things both in heaven and earth; whose eye pervades the whole sphere of created being, yea, and of uncreated night; unto whom "are known all his works," and all the works of every creature, not only "from the beginning of the world," (a poor, low, weak translation,) but *απ' αιωνος*, from all *eternity*, from everlasting to everlasting; who constrains the host of heaven, as well as the children of men, to cry out with wonder and amazement, O the depth! "the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" "Which art in heaven:"—the Lord and Ruler of all, superintending and disposing all things; who art the King of kings, and Lord of lords, the blessed and only Potentate; who art strong and girded about with power, doing whatsoever pleaseth thee; the Almighty; for whensoever thou wilt, to do is present with thee. "In heaven:"—eminently there. Heaven is thy throne, "the place where thine honour" particularly "dwelleth." But not there alone; for thou fillest heaven and earth, the whole expanse of space. "Heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high!"

Therefore should we "serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto him with reverence." Therefore should we think, speak, and act, as continually under the eye, in the immediate presence, of the Lord, the King.

7. "Hallowed be thy name."—This is the first of the six petitions whereof the prayer itself is composed. The name of God is God himself; the nature of God, so far as it can be discovered to man. It means therefore, together with his existence, all his attributes or perfections:—his *eternity*, particularly signified by his great and incommunicable name, *JEHOVAH*, as the apostle John translates it, *Το Α και το Ω, αρχη και τελος, ο ω και ο ην και ο ερχομενος*, "The Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; He which is, and which was, and which is to come;"—his fulness of Being, denoted by his other great name, *I AM THAT I AM!*—his omnipresence;—his omnipotence; who is indeed the only agent in the material world; all matter being

essentially dull and inactive, and moving only as it is moved by the finger of God; and he is the spring of action in every creature, visible and invisible, which could neither act nor exist without the continual influx and agency of his almighty power;—his wisdom, clearly deduced from the things that are seen, from the goodly order of the universe;—his Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, discovered to us in the very first line of his written word, בְּרֵא אֱלֹהִים—literally, *the Gods created*, a plural noun joined with a verb of the singular number; as well as in every part of his subsequent revelations, given by the mouth of all his holy prophets and apostles;—his essential purity and holiness;—and, above all, his love, which is the very brightness of his glory.

In praying that God, or his name, may be hallowed or glorified, we pray that he may be known, such as he is, by all that are capable thereof, by all intelligent beings, and with affections suitable to that knowledge; that he may be duly honoured and feared, and loved, by all in heaven above and in the earth beneath; by all angels and men, whom for that end he has made capable of knowing and loving him to eternity.

8. “Thy kingdom come.”—This has a close connection with the preceding petition. In order that the name of God might be hallowed, we pray that his kingdom, the kingdom of Christ, may come. This kingdom then comes to a particular person when he “repents and believes the gospel;” when he is taught of God, not only to know himself, but to know Jesus Christ and him crucified. As “this is life eternal, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent;” so it is the kingdom of God begun below, set up in the believer’s heart; “the Lord God Omnipotent” then “reigneth,” when he is known through Christ Jesus. He taketh unto himself his mighty power, that he may subdue all things unto himself. He goeth on in the soul conquering and to conquer, till he hath put all things under his feet, till “every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

When, therefore, God shall "give his Son the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession;" when "all kingdoms shall bow before him, and all nations shall do him service;" when "the mountain of the Lord's house," the church of Christ, "shall be established in the top of the mountains;" when "the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved;" then shall it be seen, that "the Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel," appearing to every soul of man as King of kings and Lord of lords. And it is meet for all those who love his appearing, to pray that he would hasten the time; that this his kingdom, the kingdom of grace, may come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth; that all mankind, receiving him for their King, truly believing in his name, may be filled with righteousness, and peace, and joy, with holiness and happiness,—till they are removed hence into his heavenly kingdom, there to reign with him for ever and ever.

For this, also, we pray in those words, "Thy kingdom come:" we pray for the coming of his everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of glory in heaven, which is the continuation and perfection of the kingdom of grace on earth. Consequently this, as well as the preceding petition, is offered up for the whole intelligent creation, who are all interested in this grand event, the final renovation of all things, by God's putting an end to misery and sin, to infirmity and death, taking all things into his own hands, and setting up the kingdom which endureth throughout all ages.

Exactly answerable to all this are those awful words in the prayer at the burial of the dead: "Beseeching thee, that it may please thee of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom: that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy everlasting glory."

9. "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."—  
This is the necessary and immediate consequence wherev

the kingdom of God is come; wherever God dwells in the soul by faith, and Christ reigns in the heart by love.

It is probable, many, perhaps the generality of men, at the first view of these words, are apt to imagine they are only an expression of, or petition for, resignation; for a readiness to suffer the will of God, whatsoever it be concerning us. And this is unquestionably a divine and excellent temper, a most precious gift of God. But this is not what we pray for in this petition; at least, not in the chief and primary sense of it. We pray, not so much for a passive, as for an active, conformity to the will of God, in saying, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

How is it done by the angels of God in heaven,—those who now circle his throne rejoicing? They do it *willingly*; they love his commandments, and gladly hearken to his words. It is their meat and drink to do his will; it is their highest glory and joy. They do it *continually*; there is no interruption in their willing service. They rest not day nor night, but employ every hour (speaking after the manner of men; otherwise our measures of duration, days, and nights, and hours, have no place in eternity) in fulfilling his commands, in executing his designs, in performing the counsel of his will. And they do it *perfectly*. No sin, no defect, belongs to angelic minds. It is true, "the stars are not pure in his sight," even the morning-stars that sing together before him. "In his sight," that is, in comparison of Him, the very angels are not pure. But this does not imply that they are not pure *in themselves*. Doubtless they are; they are without spot and blameless. They are altogether devoted to his will, and perfectly obedient in all things.

If we view this in another light, we may observe, the angels of God in heaven do *all* the will of God. And they do nothing else, nothing but what they are absolutely assured is his will. Again: they do all the will of God *as* he willeth; in the manner which pleases him, and no other. Yea, and they do this, only *because* it is his will; for this end, and no other reason.

10. When, therefore, we pray that the will of God may "be done in earth as it is in heaven," the meaning is, that all the inhabitants of the earth, even the whole race of mankind, may do the will of their Father which is in heaven, as *willingly* as the holy angels; that these may do it *continually*, even as they, without any interruption of their willing service; yea, and that they may do it *perfectly*,—that "the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, may make them perfect in every good work to do his will, and work in them" all "which is well-pleasing in his sight."

In other words, we pray that we and all mankind may do the whole will of God in all things; and nothing else, not the least thing but what is the holy and acceptable will of God: we pray that we may do the whole will of God *as* he willeth, in the manner that pleases him: and, lastly, that we may do it *because* it is his will; that this may be the sole reason and ground, the whole and only motive, of whatsoever we think, or whatsoever we speak or do.

11. "Give us this day our daily bread."—In the three former petitions we have been praying for all mankind. We come now more particularly to desire a supply for our own wants. Not that we are directed, even here, to confine our prayer altogether to ourselves; but this, and each of the following petitions, may be used for the whole church of Christ upon earth.

By "bread" we may understand all things needful, whether for our souls or bodies; *τα προς ζωην και σωτηριαν*,—*the things pertaining to life and godliness*: we understand not barely the outward bread, what our Lord terms "the meat which perisheth;" but much more the spiritual bread, the grace of God, the food "which endureth unto everlasting life." It was the judgment of many of the ancient fathers, that we are here to understand the sacramental bread also; daily received in the beginning by the whole church of Christ, and highly esteemed, till the love of many waxed cold, as the grand channel whereby the grace of his Spirit was conveyed to the souls of all the children of God.

“Our daily bread.”—The word we render *daily*, has been differently explained by different commentators. But the most plain and natural sense of it seems to be this, which is retained in almost all translations, as well ancient as modern;—what is sufficient for this day; and so for each day as it succeeds.

12. “Give us:”—for we claim nothing of right, but only of free mercy. We deserve not the air we breathe, the earth that bears, or the sun that shines upon us. All our desert, we own, is hell! But God loves us freely; therefore, we ask him to give, what we can no more procure for ourselves, than we can merit it at his hands.

Not that either the goodness or the power of God is a reason for us to stand idle. It is his will that we should use all diligence in all things; that we should employ our utmost endeavours, as much as if our success were the natural effect of our own wisdom and strength; and then, as though we had done nothing, we are to depend on Him, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

“This day:”—for we are to take no thought for the morrow. For this very end has our wise Creator divided life into these little portions of time, so clearly separated from each other, that we might look on every day as a fresh gift of God, another life, which we may devote to his glory; and that every evening may be as the close of life, beyond which we are to see nothing but eternity.

13. “And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.”—As nothing but sin can hinder the bounty of God from flowing forth upon every creature, so this petition naturally follows the former; that, all hinderances being removed, we may the more clearly trust in the God of love for every manner of thing which is good.

“Our trespasses.”—The word properly signifies *our debts*. Thus our sins are frequently represented in Scripture; every sin laying us under a fresh debt to God, to whom we already owe, as it were, ten thousand talents. What, then, can we answer when he shall say, “Pay me that thou owest?” We are utterly insolvent;

we have nothing to pay; we have wasted all our substance. Therefore, if he deal with us according to the rigour of his law, if he exact what he justly may, he must command us to be "bound hand and foot, and delivered over to the tormentors."

Indeed we are already bound hand and foot by the chains of our own sins. These, considered with regard to ourselves, are chains of iron and fetters of brass. They are wounds wherewith the world, the flesh, and the devil have gashed and mangled us all over. They are diseases that drink up our blood and spirits, that bring us down to the chambers of the grave. But, considered as they are here, with regard to God, they are debts immense and numberless. Well, therefore, seeing we have nothing to pay, may we cry unto Him, that he would frankly forgive us all!

The word translated *forgive* implies either to forgive a debt, or to unloose a chain. And if we attain the former, the latter follows of course: if our debts are forgiven, the chains fall off our hands. As soon as ever, through the free grace of God in Christ, we "receive forgiveness of sins," we receive likewise "a lot among those which are sanctified, by faith which is in him." Sin has lost its power: it has no dominion over those who are under grace, that is, in favour with God. As "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," so they are freed from sin as well as from guilt. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in" them, and they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

14. "As we forgive them that trespass against us." - In these words our Lord clearly declares both on what condition, and in what degree or manner, we may look to be forgiven of God. All our trespasses and sins are forgiven us *if* we forgive, and *as* we forgive, others. This is a point of the utmost importance. And our blessed Lord is so jealous lest at any time we should let it slip out of our thoughts, that he not only inserts it in the body of his prayer, but presently after repeats it twice over. "If," saith he, "ye forgive men their trespasses, your

heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Verses 14, 15.) Secondly, God forgives us *as we forgive others*. So that if any malice or bitterness, if any taint of unkindness or anger remains, if we do not clearly, fully, and from the heart, forgive all men their trespasses, we so far cut short the forgiveness of our own : God cannot clearly and fully forgive us : he may show us some degree of mercy ; but we will not suffer him to blot out all our sins, and forgive all our iniquities.

In the mean time, while we do not from our hearts forgive our neighbour his trespasses, what manner of prayer are we offering to God whenever we utter these words? We are indeed setting God at open defiance ; we are daring him to do his worst. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us!" That is, in plain terms, "Do not thou forgive us at all : we desire no favour at thy hands. We pray that thou wilt keep our sins in remembrance, and that thy wrath may abide upon us." But can you seriously offer such a prayer to God? And hath he not yet cast you quick into hell? Oh, tempt him no longer! Now, even now, by his grace, forgive as you would be forgiven! Now have compassion on thy fellow-servant, as God hath had, and will have, pity on thee!

15. "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."—"And lead us not into temptation." The word translated *temptation* means trial of any kind. And so the English word *temptation* was formerly taken in an indifferent sense ; although now it is usually understood of sollicitation to sin. St. James uses the word in both these senses ; first, in its general, then in its restrained, acceptation. He takes it in the former sense when he saith, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he is tried," or approved of God, "he shall receive the crown of life." (James i. 12.) He immediately adds, taking the word in the latter sense, "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God : for God cannot be tempted with evil,

neither tempteth he any man : but every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away* of his own lust," or *desire*, ἐξελκόμενος,—drawn out of God, in whom alone he is safe,—“and enticed;” caught as a fish with a bait. Then it is, when he is thus *drawn away and enticed*, that he properly enters into temptation. Then temptation covers him as a cloud; it overspreads his whole soul. Then how hardly shall he escape out of the snare! Therefore we beseech God “not to lead us into temptation,” that is, (seeing God tempteth no man,) not to suffer us to be led into it. “But deliver us from evil.” Rather, “*from the evil one*,” ἀπο τοῦ πονηροῦ. Ο πονηρὸς is unquestionably *the wicked one*, emphatically so called, the prince and god of this world, who works with mighty power in the children of disobedience. But all those who are the children of God by faith are delivered out of his hands. He may fight against them; and so he will. But he cannot conquer, unless they betray their own souls. He may torment for a time, but he cannot destroy: for God is on their side, who will not fail, in the end, to “avenge his own elect, that cry unto him day and night.” Lord, when we are tempted, suffer us not to enter into temptation! Do thou make a way for us to escape, that the wicked one touch us not!

16. The conclusion of this divine prayer, commonly called “the doxology,” is a solemn thanksgiving, a compendious acknowledgment of the attributes and works of God. “For thine is the kingdom:”—the sovereign right of all things that are, or ever were, created; yea, thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages. “The power:”—the executive power whereby thou governest all things in thy everlasting kingdom; whereby thou doest whatsoever pleaseth thee, in all places of thy dominion. “And the glory:”—the praise due from every creature, for thy power, and the mightiness of thy kingdom, and for all thy wondrous works which thou workest from everlasting, and shalt do, world without end, “for ever and ever. Amen!” So be it!

I believe it will not be unacceptable to the serious reader to subjoin

**A PARAPHRASE ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.**

- 1 **FATHER** of all, whose powerful voice  
 Call'd forth this universal frame;  
 Whose mercies over all rejoice,  
 Through endless ages still the same:  
 Thou, by thy word, upholdest all;  
 Thy bounteous love to all is show'd;  
 Thou hear'st thy every creature's call,  
 And fillest every mouth with good.
- 2 **In heaven** thou reign'st, enthroned in light,  
 Nature's expanse beneath thee spread;  
 Earth, air, and sea, before thy sight,  
 And hell's deep gloom, are open laid.  
 Wisdom, and might, and love are thine:  
 Prostrate before thy face we fall,  
 Confess thine attributes divine,  
 And hail thee Sovereign Lord of all!
- 3 **Thee Sovereign Lord** let all confess,  
 That move in earth, or air, or sky:  
 Revere thy power, thy goodness bless,  
 Tremble before thy piercing eye.  
 All ye who owe to Him your birth,  
 In praise your every hour employ:  
 Jehovah reigns! Be glad, O earth!  
 And shout, ye morning stars, for joy!
- 4 **Son of thy Sire's eternal love,**  
 Take to thyself thy mighty power.  
 Let all earth's sons thy mercy prove,  
 Let all thy bleeding grace adore.  
 The triumphs of thy love display;  
 In every heart reign thou alone;  
 Till all thy foes confess thy sway,  
 And glory ends what grace begun.
- 5 **Spirit of grace, and health, and power,**  
 Fountain of light and love below;  
 Abroad thine healing influence shower,  
 O'er all the nations let it flow.

- Inflame our hearts with perfect love;  
 In us the work of faith fulfil;  
 So not heaven's host shall swifter move,  
 Than we on earth to do thy will.
- 6 Father, 'tis thine each day to yield  
 Thy children's wants a fresh supply:  
 Thou cloth'st the lilies of the field,  
 And hearest the young ravens cry.  
 On thee we cast our care; we live  
 Through thee, who know'st our every need:  
 O! feed us with thy grace, and give  
 Our souls this day the living bread!
- 7 Eternal, spotless Lamb of God,  
 Before the world's foundation slain,  
 Sprinkle us ever with thy blood;  
 O! cleanse and keep us ever clean!  
 To every soul (all praise to thee!)  
 Our bowels of compassion move:  
 And all mankind by this may see  
 God is in us; for God is love.
- 8 Giver and Lord of life, whose power  
 And guardian care for all are free;  
 To thee, in fierce temptation's hour,  
 From sin and Satan let us flee.  
 Thine, Lord, we are, and ours thou art;  
 In us be all thy goodness show'd;  
 Renew, enlarge, and fill our heart  
 With peace, and joy, and heaven, and God
- 9 Blessing and honour, praise and love,  
 Co-equal, co-eternal Three,  
 In earth below, in heaven above,  
 By all thy works be paid to Thee.  
 Thrice Holy! thine the kingdom is,  
 The power omnipotent is thine;  
 And when created nature dies,  
 Thy never-ceasing glories shine.

## QUESTIONS ON SERMON XXVI.

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- Ques. 1. (§ 1.) What has been already described? What is here set forth?
- Ques. 2. (§ 2.) How is the necessity of purity of intention shown?
- Ques. 3. (I. 1.) What is the first direction?
- Ques. 4. (I. 2.) What is said concerning alms-doing?
- Ques. 5. (I. 3.) What practice of the Jews is forbidden?
- Ques. 6. (I. 4.) What proverbial expression is used?
- Ques. 7. (II. 1.) What follow after works of charity or mercy?
- Ques. 8. (II. 2.) How is purity of intention destroyed?
- Ques. 9. (II. 3.) How are we commanded to pray?
- Ques. 10. (II. 4.) What further command is given? What is meant by "vain repetitions?"
- Ques. 11. (II. 5.) What is the end or purpose of prayer?
- Ques. 12. (III. 1.) What does our Lord subjoin?
- Ques. 13. (III. 2.) What is this prayer called? What is said of its completeness?
- Ques. 14. (III. 3.) Of how many parts does it consist? How is it divided?
- Ques. 15. (III. 4.) If God is our Father, what then?
- Ques. 16. (III. 5.) Why do we say "Our Father?"
- Ques. 17. (III. 6.) What is meant by "in heaven?"
- Ques. 18. (III. 7.) What is meant by the first petition?
- Ques. 19. (III. 8.) What is the second petition?
- Ques. 20. (III. 9.) What is the third?
- Ques. 21. (III. 10.) What is the meaning of the words, the "will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven?"

Ques. 22. (III. 11.) What is the fourth petition? How does it differ from the three preceding?

Ques. 23. (III. 12.) What do we mean by "give us?"

Ques. 24. (III. 13.) What is the fifth petition? How is our forgiveness conditioned?

Ques. 25. (III. 14.) Can we refuse to forgive others, and be ourselves forgiven?

Ques. 26. (III. 15.) What is the sixth petition? What is meant by "lead us not into temptation?"

Ques. 27. (III. 16.) How does the prayer conclude?

Ques. 28. Is the prayer a form intended to supersede all others, or merely a form which contains in itself all kinds and species of prayer?























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