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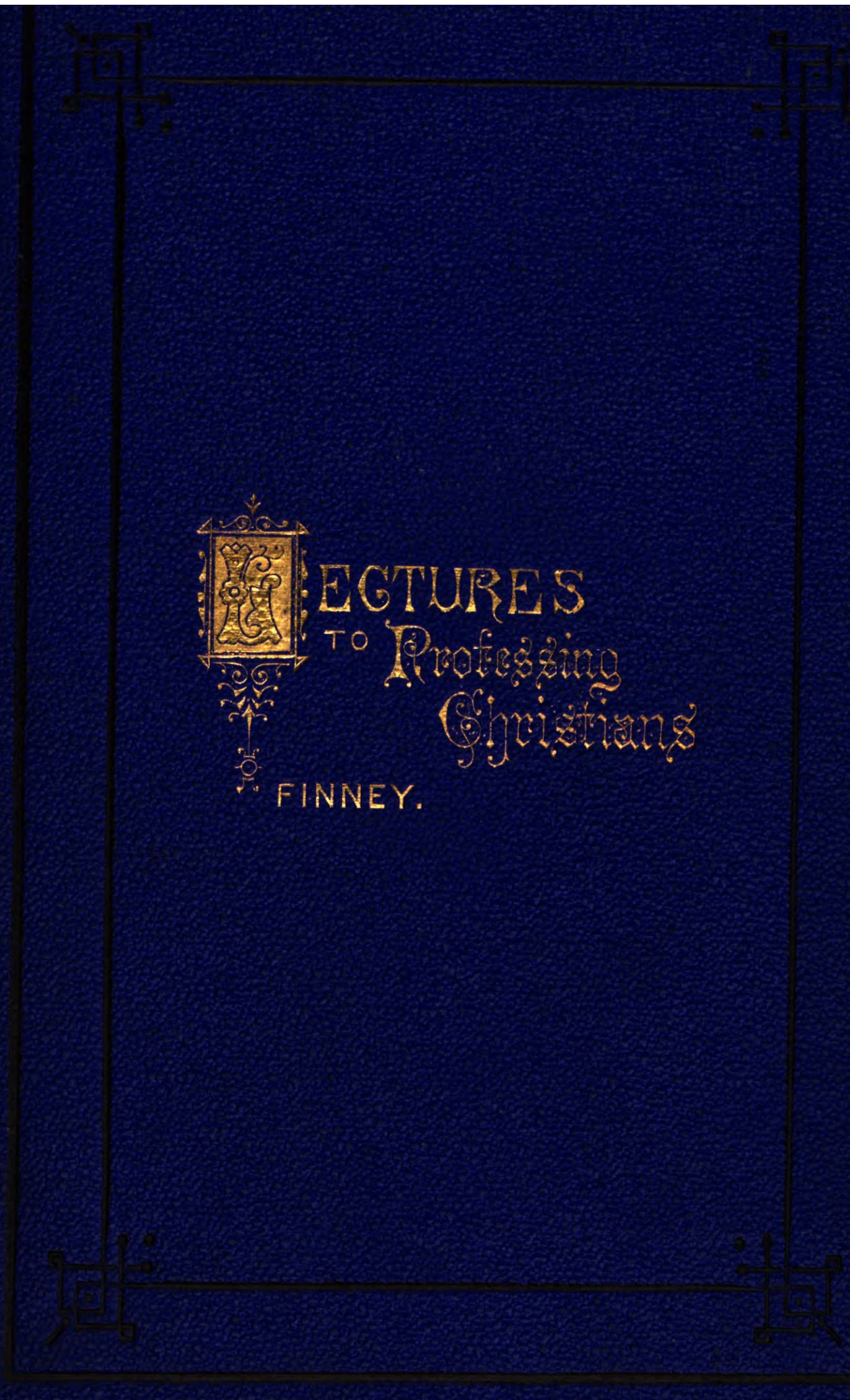
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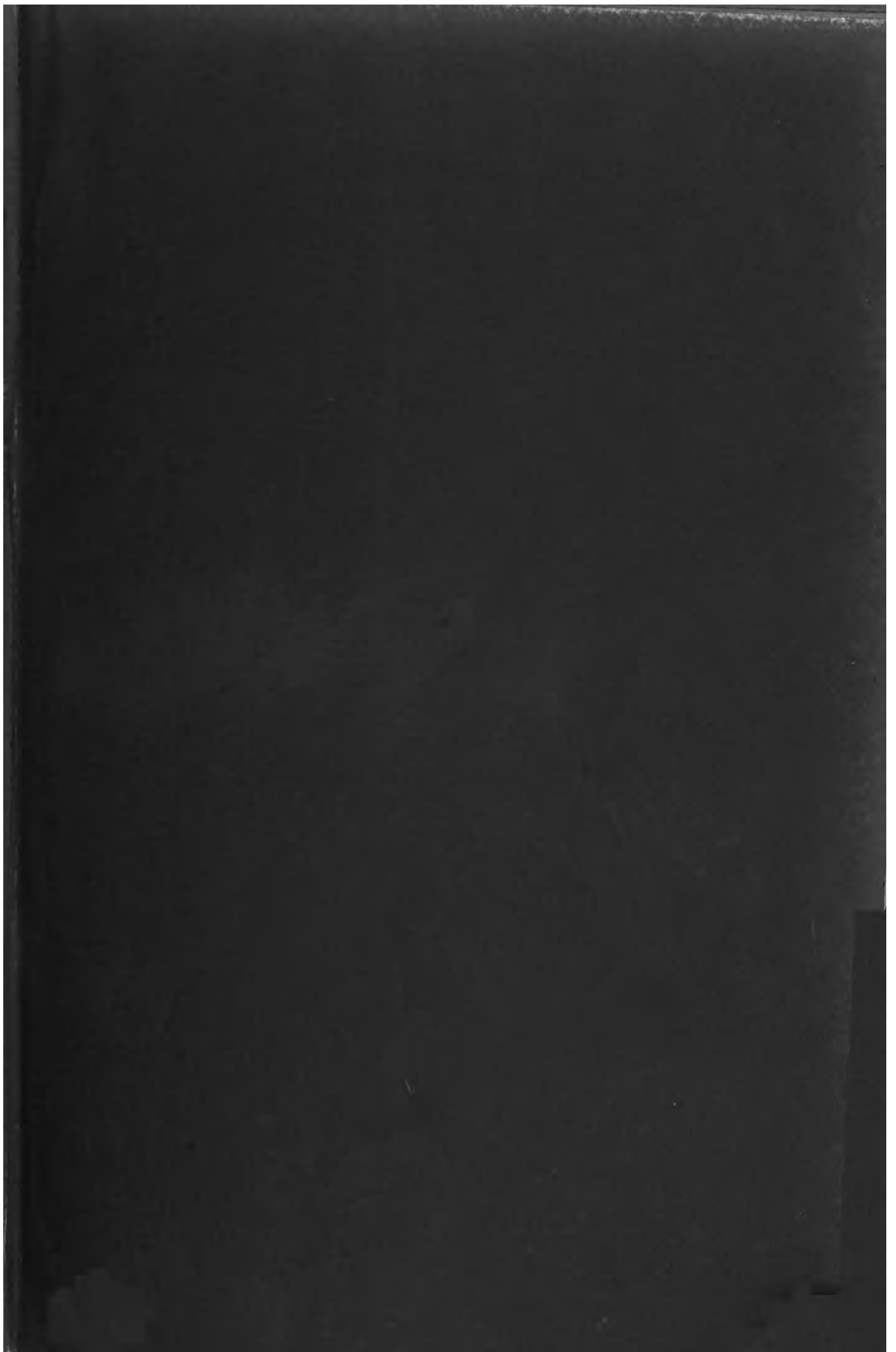


**L**ECTURES  
TO Professing  
Christians  
BY  
FINNEY.



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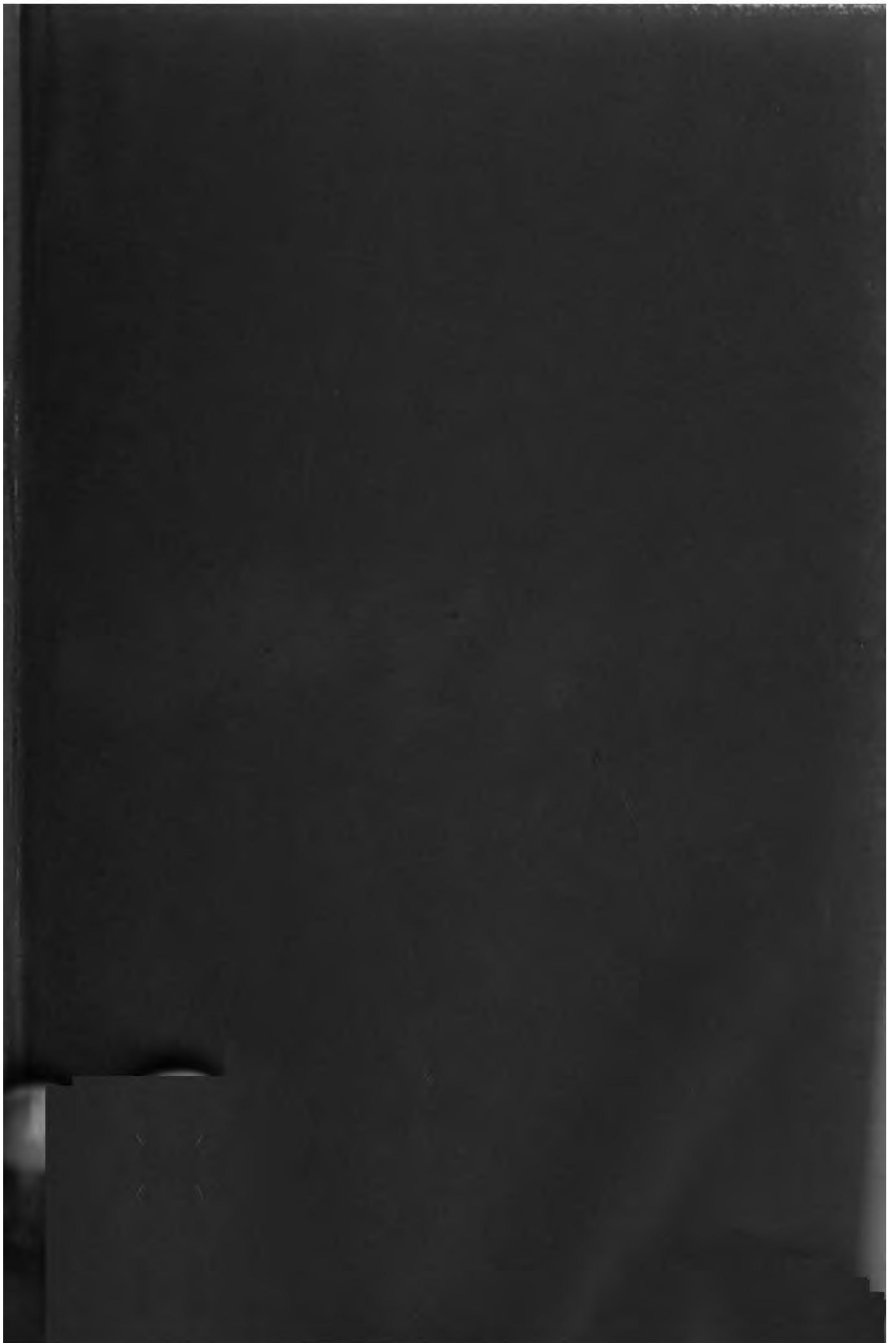






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LECTURES  
TO  
PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

BY THE REV. PROFESSOR  
CHARLES G. FINNEY.

"PENUEL" LIBRARY, VOL. IX.

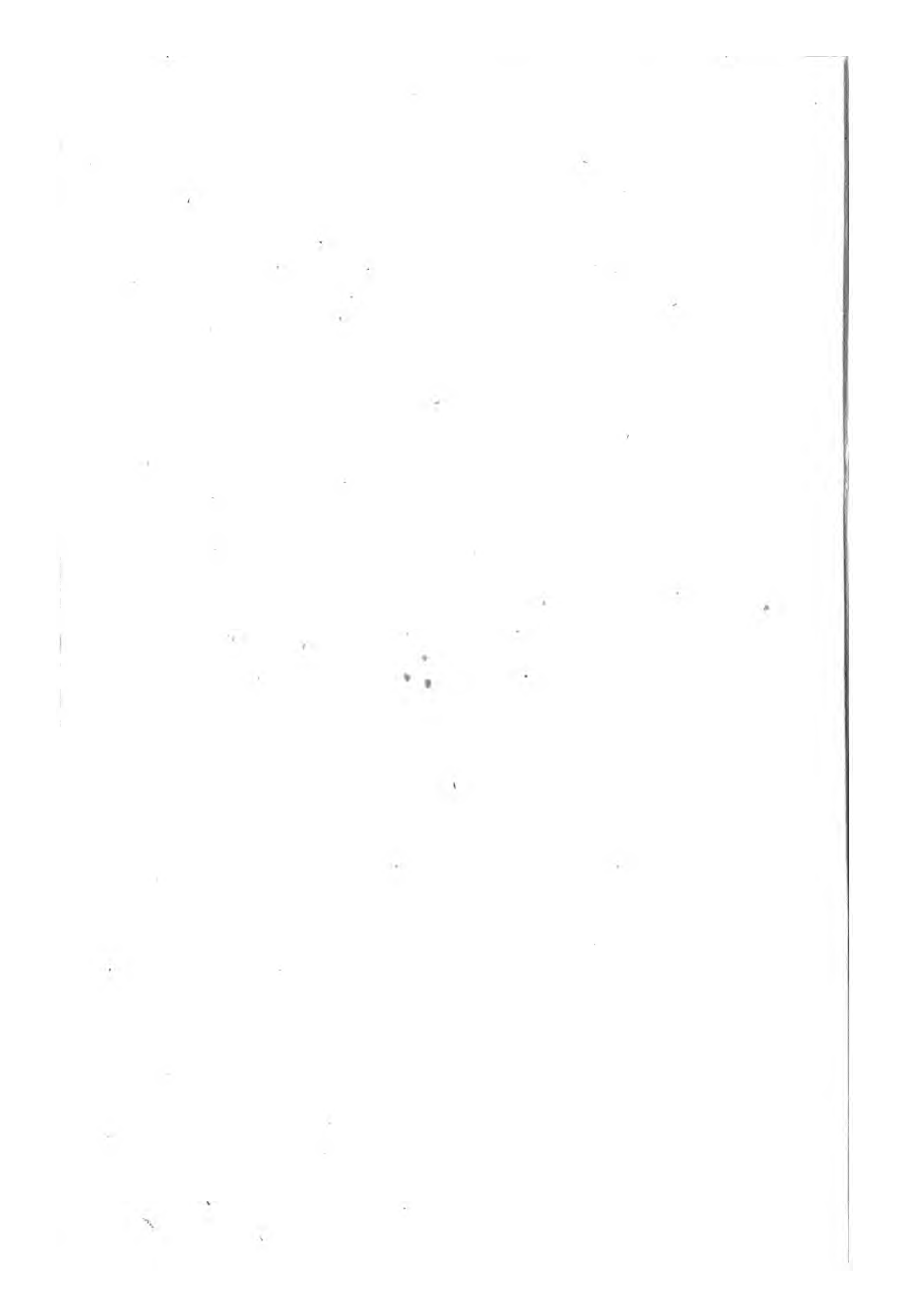


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## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HE author of the following lectures was one of those men who, in almost any profession, are sure to rise to eminence. He was born in an American village in 1792, and was designed for the legal profession, the training for which, doubtless, afterwards gave a tone to his modes of thought as a religious teacher. His conversion to God was singularly decisive. He was at the time living among influences little calculated to develop a desire for spiritual life—a dead church in the midst of prevailing indifference and scepticism. Becoming the subject of powerful conviction, with that decision of character ever so marked in him, he “made up his mind that he would settle the question of his soul’s salvation at once.” He went away into the woods to pray, and after terrible struggles with his own obstinacy and pride was enabled to yield up his will, and accept the mercy of God through Christ.

“Just at that point,” he says, “this passage of Scripture seemed to drop into my mind with a flood of light: ‘Then shall ye go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.’ I instantly seized hold of this with my heart. I had intellectually believed the Bible before, but never had the truth been in my mind that faith was a voluntary trust instead of an intellectual state. I was as conscious as I was of my exist-

ence, of trusting at that moment in God's veracity. Somehow, I knew that that was a passage of Scripture, though I do not think that I had ever read it. I knew that it was God's word, and God's voice, as it were, that spoke to me. I cried to Him, ' Lord, I take Thee at Thy word. Now Thou knowest that I do search for Thee with all my heart, and that I have come here to pray to Thee ; and that Thou hast promised to hear me.'

Immediately on his conversion began that career of faithful service for Christ which ended only with his life. His recently published autobiography presents him almost exclusively as a revival preacher, earnest, resolved and successful as a soul saved. But his influence as a Christian thinker has been very great, and he had that power, so often allied to genius, of impressing himself upon those with whom he came in contact. He took a bold position in regard to the Anti-Slavery question, and suffered much obloquy on account of his convictions as to the rights of the enslaved negroes. He made two visits to England, being first invited to labour, as an evangelist, in some villages near Huntingdon. During his second visit, in 1858, his teaching in Birmingham, Bolton, London, and other places made a profound sensation. We have been told by persons who knew the facts that in one Lancashire town money amounting to thousands of pounds found its way back to its rightful owners—so many were moved to restitution by the practical earnest repentance he inculcated.

Mr Finney is chiefly known in England by his "*Lectures on Revivals of Religion*" which have had a large circulation, and have been the means of stimulating Christian activity in many

localities. It is said that numerous revivals have resulted from their perusal.

The "*Lectures to Professing Christians*" are not so well known as they deserve to be. They are marked by the same rightforwardness of address and close application to the conscience which so characterized the author's public teaching. We believe their re-publication will meet a very distinct need just now, when so many are inquiring as to what is the Scripture teaching on the doctrine of sanctification. These lectures teach a holiness which is far removed from mere sentiment. True to the central Christian truth that love is the mainspring of obedience to the divine law, our author sets forth the claims of that Law with no faltering voice. Writing in his old age of the truths contained in this volume, he says :—

"Those sermons to Christians were very much the result of a searching that was going on in my own mind. I mean that the Spirit of God was showing me many things, in regard to the question of sanctification, that led me to preach those sermons to Christians. Many Christians regarded those Lectures as rather an exhibition of the Law than of the Gospel. But I did not, and do not, so regard them. For me the Law and Gospel have but one rule of life; and every violation of the spirit of the Law is also a violation of the spirit of the Gospel. But I have long been satisfied that the higher forms of Christian experience are attained only as a result of a terribly searching application of God's law to the human conscience and heart."—  
(Memoirs, p. 339.)

The veteran evangelist closed his days at Oberlin College,

of which for many years he had been President. God gave him length of days and honour; and he lived to see the spread of many of those truths for which he had laboured and suffered in his earlier years.

“ His last day on earth was a quiet Sabbath, which he enjoyed in the midst of his family, walking out with his wife at sunset, to listen to the music at the opening of the evening service in the church near by. Upon retiring he was seized with pains which seemed to indicate some affection of the heart, and after a few hours of suffering, as the morning dawned, he died, August 16th, 1875, lacking two weeks of having completed his eighty-third year.”

July, 1876.

I. E. PAGE.

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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

AS these Lectures occupied from an hour and a quarter to an hour and three quarters in the delivery, it will be seen by their length, as here given, that the reporter took down but little more than a full skeleton of them. I have made but very slight alterations and additions in revising them, for the following reasons :

Their publication was determined on too late, so that I had very little time.

My ill health and multiplied duties forbade.

To have enlarged them much would have swelled the volume beyond the contemplated size.

From experience I have learned that the conversational and condensed style in which they were reported, is more interesting and edifying to common readers, than a more elevated and less laconic style.

I have, therefore, left them as they were reported, with a few verbal and trifling alterations.

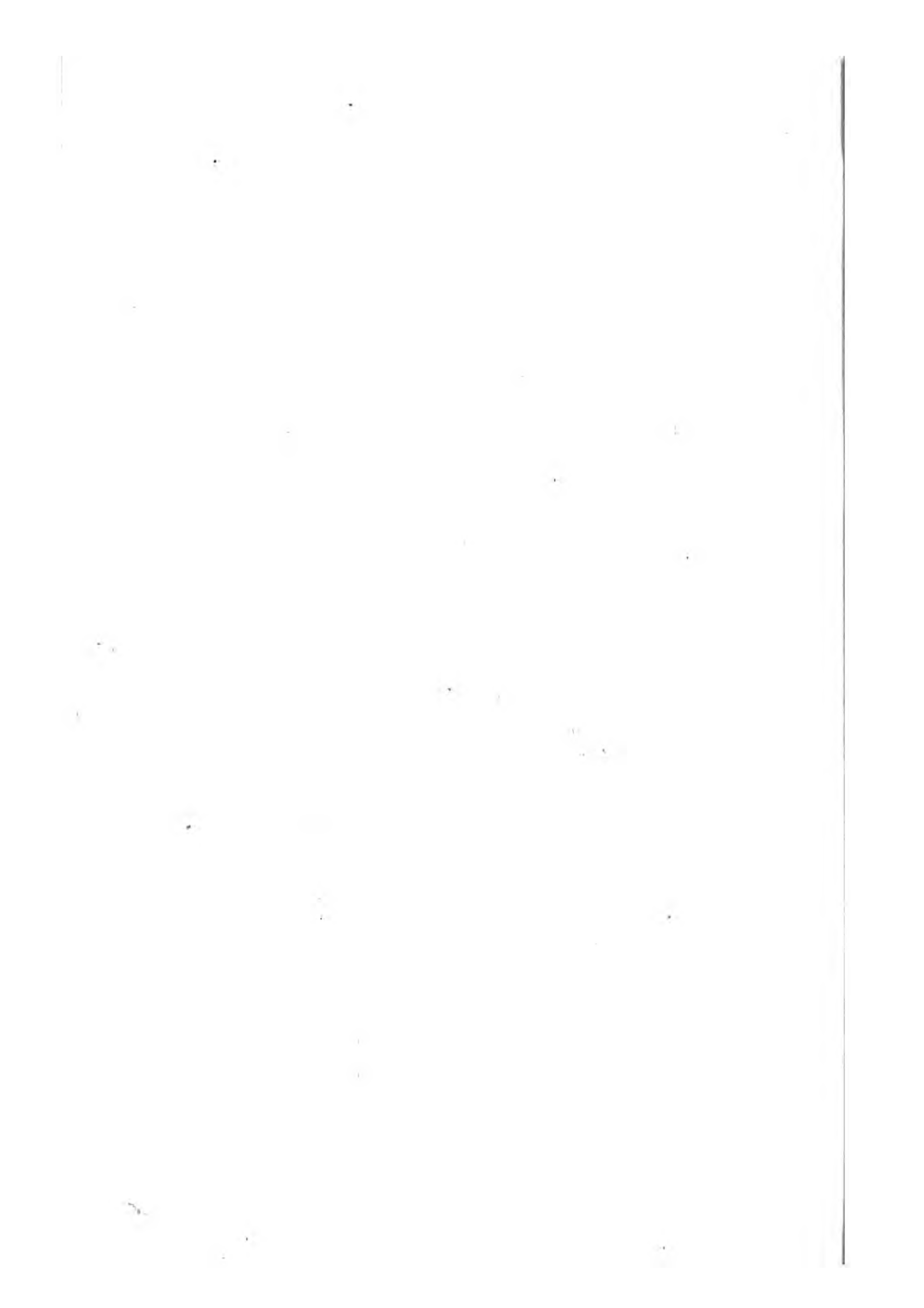
The author of the Lectures has no claim to literary merit ; and, if he knows his own heart, has no desire that the Lectures should be any thing else than *useful*.

I have reason to believe that, *upon the whole*, they will be as much so in their present as under any other form I could give them, circumstanced as I am.

As my friends wish to have them in a volume ; they must take them as they are.

C. G. FINNEY.





## TRUE SAINTS.

“Who is on the Lord's side?”—EXODUS xxxii. 26,

**T**HIS question was addressed by Moses to the professed people of God, immediately after their great departure from God while Moses was in the Mount, when they went and worshipped a golden calf which had been cast for them by Aaron. After expostulating with the guilty nation, he called out, “Who is on the Lord's side?” It is not my intention to dwell on the history of this case particularly, but to come at once to the main design I have in view this evening, which is to show that there are

### THREE CLASSES OF PROFESSING CHRISTIANS.

The true friends of God and man. Those who are actuated by hope and fear, or in other words, by self-love or by selfishness. Those who are actuated by public opinion. These three classes may be known by attending to the characteristic developments which show what is the leading design in their religion. It needs not be proved, that persons may set out in religion from very different motives, some from real love to religion, and some from other motives. The differences may be arranged in these three classes, and by attending to the development of their real design in becoming religious, you learn their characters. They all profess to be servants of God, and yet by observing the lives of many, it becomes manifest that instead of their being God's servants they are only trying to make God their servant. Their leading aim and object is to secure their own salvation, or some other advantage for themselves, through the medium of the favour of God. They are seeking to make God their friend, that they may make use of him to serve their own turn.

I. There is a class of professed Christians who are the true friends of God and man.

If you attend to those things which develop the true design and aim of their religion, you will see it to be such. They are truly and sincerely benevolent.

They will make it manifest that this is their character, by their carefulness in avoiding sin.

They will show that they hate it in themselves, and they hate it in others. They will not justify it in themselves, and they will not justify it in others. They will not seek to cover up or to excuse their own sins, neither will they try to cover up or to excuse the sins of others. In short, *they aim at perfect holiness*. This course of conduct makes it evident that they are the true friends of God. I do not mean to say that every true friend of God is perfect, no more than I would say that every truly affectionate and obedient child is perfect, or never fails in duty to his parent. But if he is an affectionate and obedient child, his aim is to obey always, and if he fails in any respect, he by no means justifies it, or pleads for it, or aims to cover it up, but as soon as he comes to think of the matter, is dissatisfied with himself, and condemns his conduct.

So these persons who are the true friends of God and man, are ever ready to complain of themselves, and to blame and condemn themselves for what is wrong. But you never see them finding fault with God. You never hear them excusing themselves and throwing off the blame upon their Maker, by telling of their inability to obey God, or speaking as if God had required impossibilities of his creatures. They always speak as if they felt that what God has required is right and reasonable, and themselves only to blame for their disobedience.

They manifest a deep *abhorrence of the sins of other people*.

They do not cover up the sins of others, or plead for them and excuse them, or smooth them over by "perhaps" this, or "perhaps" that. You never hear them apologising for sin. As they are indignant at sin in themselves, they are just as much so when they see it in others. They know its horrible nature, and abhor it always.

Another thing in which this spirit manifests itself, is *zeal for the honour and glory of God*.

They show the same ardour to promote God's honour and interest, that the true patriot does to promote the honour and interest of his country. If he greatly loves his country, its government and its interest, he sets his heart upon promoting its

advancement and benefit. He is never so happy as when he is doing something for the honour and advancement of his country. So a child that truly loves his father, is never so happy as when he is advancing his father's honour and interest. And he never feels more indignant grief, than when he sees his father abused or injured. If he sees his father disobeyed or abused by those who ought to obey and love and honour him, his heart breaks forth with indignant grief.

There are multitudes of professing Christians, and even ministers, who are very zealous to defend their own character and their own honour. But this one class feel more engaged, and their hearts beat higher when defending or advancing God's honour. These are the true friends of God and man.

They show that they *sympathize with God* in his feelings towards man.

They have the same kind of friendship for souls that God feels. I do not mean that they feel in the same degree, but that they have the same kind of feelings. There is such a thing as loving the souls of men and hating their conduct too. There is such a thing as constitutional sympathy, which persons feel for those who are in distress. This is natural. You always feel this for a person in distress, unless you have some selfish reason for feeling malevolent. If you saw a murderer hung, you would feel compassion for him. The wicked have this natural sympathy for those that suffer.

There is another peculiar kind of sympathy which the real child of God feels and manifests towards sinners. It is a mingled feeling of abhorrence and compassion, of indignation against his sins, and pity for his person. It is possible to feel this deep abhorrence of sin mingled with deep compassion for souls capable of such endless happiness, and yet bound to eternal misery.

I will explain myself. There are two kinds of love.—One is the love of benevolence. This has no respect to the character of the person loved, but merely views the individual as exposed to suffering and misery. This God feels towards all men. The other kind includes esteem or approbation of character. God feels this only towards the righteous. He never feels *this* love towards sinners. He infinitely abhors them. He has an infinitely strong exercise of compassion and abhorrence at the same time. Christians have the same feelings, only not in the

same degree, but they have them at the same time. Probably they never feel right unless they have both these feelings in exercise at the same time. The Christian does not feel as God feels towards individuals, nor feel according to the true character of the individuals, unless both these feelings exist in his mind at the same time. You see this by one striking characteristic. The Christian will rebuke most pointedly and frequently those for whom he feels the deepest compassion. Did you never see this? Did you never see a parent yearning with compassion over a child, and reprove him with tears, and yet with a pungency that would make the little offender quail under his rebuke. Jesus Christ often manifested strongly these two emotions. He wept over Jerusalem, and yet he tells the reason, in a manner that shows his burning indignation against their conduct. "O, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee!"—Ah! what a full view he had of their wickedness, at the moment that he wept with compassion for the doom that hung over them. It is just so with this class of Christians. You never find one of them addressing a sinner so as merely to make him weep because somebody is weeping for him. But his most tender appeals are accompanied with strong rebuke for sin.

I wish you to remember this point—that the true friend of God and man never takes the sinner's part, because he never acts through mere compassion. And at the same time, he is never seen to denounce the sinner, without at the same time manifesting compassion for his soul, and a strong desire to save him from death.

It is a prominent object with such Christians, in all their intercourse with men, to make them friends of God.

Whether they converse, or pray, or attend to the duties of life, it is their prominent object to recommend religion and to lead everybody to glorify God. It is very natural they should do this, if they are the true friends of God. A true friend of the government wishes everybody to be a friend of the government. A true and affectionate child wishes everybody to love and respect his father. And if any one is at enmity, it is his constant aim and effort to bring him to reconciliation. The same you would expect from a true friend of God, as a leading feature of his character, that he would make it a *prominent* object of his life to reconcile sinners to God.

Now, mark me! If this is not the leading feature of your character, if it is not the absorbing topic of thought and effort to reconcile men to God, you have not the root of the matter in you. Whatever appearance of religion you may have, you lack the leading and fundamental characteristic of true piety. It wants the leading feature of the character and aims of Jesus Christ, and of his apostles and prophets. Look at them, and see how this feature stands out in strong and eternal relief, as the leading characteristic, the prominent design and object of their lives. Now let me ask you, what is the leading object of your life, as appears in your daily walk? Is it to bring all God's enemies to submit to him? If not, away with your pretensions to religion. Whatever else you have, you have not the true love of God in you.

Where there are persons of this class, you will see them scrupulously avoid every thing that in their estimation is calculated to defeat their great end.

They always wish to avoid every thing calculated to prevent the salvation of souls, every thing calculated to divert attention, or in any way to hinder the conversion of souls. It is not the natural question with them, when any thing is proposed which is doubtful, to ask, "Is this something which God expressly forbids?" The first question that naturally suggests itself to their minds is, "What will be the bearing of this upon religion? Will it have a tendency to prevent the conversion of sinners, to hinder the progress of revivals, to roll back the wheels of salvation?" If so, they do not need the thunders of Sinai to be pealed in their ears, to forbid their doing it. If they see it contrary to the spirit of holiness, and contrary to the main object they have in view, that is enough.

Look at the temperance reformation for an illustration of this. Here let me say, that it was the influence of intemperance in hindering the conversion and salvation of sinners that first turned the attention of the benevolent men who commenced the reformation, to inquire on the subject. And the same class of persons are still carrying it on. Such men do not stand and cavil at every step of the way, and say "Drinking rum is no where prohibited in the Bible, and I do not feel bound to give it up." They find that it hinders the great object for which they live, and that it is enough for them, they give it up of course. They avoid whatever they see would hinder revival, as a matter

of course, just as a merchant would avoid any thing that had a tendency to impair his credit, and defeat his object of making money by his business. Suppose a merchant was about to do something that you knew would injuriously affect his credit, and you go to him in the spirit of friendship and advise him not to do it, would he turn round and say, "Show me the passage where God has prohibited this in the Bible?" No. He don't ask you to show him anything more than this, that it is inconsistent with his main design.

Mark this, all of you. A person who is strongly desirous of the conversion of sinners does not need an express prohibition to prevent his doing that which he sees is calculated to prevent this. There is no danger of his doing that which will defeat the very object of his life.

This class of professing Christians are always distressed, unless they see the work of converting sinners going on.

They call it a lamentable state of things in the church, if no sinners are converted. No matter what else is true, no matter how rich the congregation grows, nor how popular their minister, nor how many come to hear him, their panting hearts are uneasy unless they see the work of conversion actually going on. They see that all the rest is nothing without this—yea, that even the means of grace are doing more hurt than good, unless sinners are converted.

Such professors as these are a great trouble to those who are religious from other motives, and who therefore wish to keep all quiet and have every thing go on regularly in the *good old way*. They are often called "uneasy spirits in the church." And mark it! if a church has a few such spirits in it, the minister will be made uneasy unless his preaching is such as to convert sinners. You sometimes hear of these men reproving the church, and pouring out their expostulations for living so cold and worldly, and the church reply, "O, we are doing well enough, do you not see how we flourish, it is only because you are always uneasy." When in fact their hearts are grieved and their souls in agony because sinners are not converted and souls are pressing down to hell.

You will see them when manifesting a spirit of prayer, praying not for themselves but for sinners.

If you know the habitual tenor of people's prayers, it will show which way the tide of their feelings sets. If a man is

actuated in religion mainly by a desire to save himself, you will hear him praying chiefly for himself—that he may have his sins pardoned and *enjoy* much of the Spirit of God, and the like. But if he is truly the friend of God and man, you will find that the burden of his prayers is for the glory of God in the salvation of sinners, and he is never so copious and powerful in prayer, as when he gets upon his favourite topic—the conversion of sinners. Go into the prayer meeting where such Christians pray, and instead of seeing them all shut up in the nutshell of their own interests, spending their whole prayer upon themselves, and just closing with a flourish about the kingdom of Christ, you will hear them pouring out their souls in prayer for the salvation of sinners. I believe there have been cases of such Christians who were so much absorbed in their desires for the salvation of sinners, that for weeks together they did not even pray for their own salvation. Or if they pray for themselves at all, it is that they may be clothed with the Spirit of God, so that they can go out and be mighty through God in pulling souls out of the fire.

You that are here can tell how it is with your prayers, whether you feel most and pray most for yourself or for sinners. If you know nothing about the spirit of prayer for sinners, you are not the true friend of God and man. What! no heart to feel, when sinners are going to hell by your side! No sympathy with the Son of God, who gave his life to save sinners! Away with all such professions of religion. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Don’t tell me men are truly pious, when their prayers are droned over, as much a matter of form as when the poor Popish priest counts over his beads. Such a man deceives himself, if he talks about being the true friend of God and man.

These persons do not want to ask what are the things they are *required* to do for the conversion of sinners.

When anything is presented to them that promises success in converting sinners, they do not wait to be *commanded* to do it, on pains and penalties if they do not. They only want the evidence that it is calculated to advance the object on which their hearts are set, and they will engage in it with all their soul. The question is not with them all the while, “What am I expressly commanded to do?” but “In what way can I do most for the salvation of souls, and the conversion of the world to



God?" They do not wait for an express command in the Bible, before they will engage in the work of missions, or Sabbath schools, or any other enterprise that promises to save souls; but they are ready to every good word and work.

Another characteristic of such Christians is a disposition to *deny themselves to do good to others.*

God has established throughout all the universe the principle of *giving*. Even in the natural world, the rivers, the ocean, the clouds, all *give*. It is so throughout the whole kingdom of nature and of grace. This diffusive principle is everywhere recognized. This is the very spirit of Christ. He sought not to please himself, but to do good to others. He found his highest happiness in denying himself to do good to others. So it is with this class of persons, they are ever ready to deny themselves of enjoyments and comforts, and even of necessities, when by so doing they can do more good to others.

They are continually devising *new means and new measures* for doing good.

This is what would be expected from their continual desire *to do good*. Instead of being satisfied with what does not succeed, they are continually devising new ways and means to effect their object. They are not like those persons who make themselves satisfied with doing what they *call* their *duty*. Where an individual is aiming mainly at his own salvation, he may think if he does his duty he is discharged from responsibility, and so he is satisfied—he thinks he has escaped from divine wrath and gained heaven for himself, by doing what God required him to do, and he cannot help it, whether sinners are saved or lost. But with the other class, it is not so much their object to gain heaven and avoid wrath, but their leading object is to save souls and to honour God. And if this object is not advanced, they are in pain. Such a man is the one whose soul is all the while devising liberal things, and trying new things, and if one fails, trying another and another, and cannot rest till he has found something that will succeed in the salvation of souls.

They always manifest great grief when they see the church asleep and doing nothing for the salvation of sinners.

They know the difficulty—the impossibility of doing anything considerable for the salvation of sinners while the church are asleep. Go into a church where the great mass are doing nothing for the conversion of sinners, and floating along on the

current of the world, and you will find that the true friends of God and man are grieved at such a state of things. Those who have other objects in view in being religious, may think they are going on very well. They are not grieved when they see the professed people of God going after show and folly. But if there are any of this class, you will find them grieved and distressed at heart, because the church is in such a state.

They are grieved if they see reason to think their minister temporizes, or does not reprove the church pointedly and faithfully for their sins.

The other classes of professors are willing to be rocked to sleep, and willing their minister should preach smooth, flowery and eloquent sermons, and flattering sermons, with no point and no power. But these are not satisfied unless he preaches powerfully and pointedly, and boldly, and rebukes and entreats and exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Their souls are not fed, or edified, or satisfied with any thing that does not take hold, and do the work for which the ministry was appointed by Jesus Christ.

This class of persons will always stand by a faithful minister, who preaches the truth boldly and pointedly.

No matter if the truth he preaches hits them, they like it, and say, Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be an excellent oil. When the truth is poured forth with power, their souls are fed, and grow strong in grace. They can pray for such a minister. They can weep in their closet, and pour out their souls in prayer for him, that he may have the Spirit of God always with him. While others scold and cavil at him and talk about his being extravagant, and all that, you will find Christians of this sort will stand by him, yea, and would go to the stake with him for the testimony of Jesus. And this they do for the best of all reasons—such preaching falls in with the great design for which these Christians live.

This sort of Christians are especially distressed when ministers preach sermons not adapted to convert sinners.

I mean when the sermon is not specially addressed to the church, to stir them up. Others may approve the sermon, and praise it, and tell what a great sermon it is, or how eloquent, or lucid or grand or sublime, but it does not suit *them* if it lacks this one characteristic—a tendency to convert sinners. You will find some people that are great sticklers for the doctrine of

election, and they will not believe it is a gospel sermon unless it has the doctrine of election in it, but if the doctrine of election is in it they are suited whether it is adapted to convert sinners or not. But where a man has his heart set on the conversion of sinners, if he hears a sermon not calculated to do this, he feels as if it lacked the *great thing* that constitutes a gospel sermon. But if they hear a sermon calculated to save souls, then they are fed and their souls rejoice.

Hence you see the ground for the astonishing difference you often find in the judgment which people pass upon preaching. There is in fact no better test of character than this. It is easy to see who they are that are filled with the love of God and of souls, by the judgment which they pass upon preaching. When they hear a sermon that is not particularly designed to probe and rouse the church and bring them to action, nor such as to bear down on sinners, or tend to convert sinners, they declare it is not the sermon for them.

You will always find this class of persons speaking in terms of dissatisfaction with themselves, that they do no more for the conversion of sinners.

However much they may really *do* for this object, it seems that the more they do the more they long to do. They are never satisfied. Instead of being satisfied with the present degree of their success, there is no end of their longing for the conversion of sinners. I recollect a good man, who used to pray till he was exhausted with praying for individuals and for places and for the world's conversion. Once when he was quite exhausted with praying, he exclaimed, "Oh! my longing, aching heart! There is no such thing as satisfying my unutterable desires for the conversion of sinners. My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath." That man, though he had been useful beyond almost any other man of his age, yet he saw so much to do, and he so longed to see the work go forward and sinners saved, that his mortal frame could not sustain it. "I find," said he one day, "that I am dying for want of strength to do more to save the souls of men; O, how much I want strength, that I may save souls."

If you wish to move this class of persons, you must make use of motives drawn from their great and leading object.

If you wish to move them, you must hold up the situation of

sinner, and show how they dishonour God, and you will find this will move their souls and set them on fire sooner than any appeal to their hopes and fears. Roll on them this great object. Show them how they can convert sinners, and their longing hearts beat and wrestle with God in prayer, and travail for souls, until they see them converted and Christ formed in them the hope of glory.

I might mention many other characteristics which belong to this class of professing Christians—the true friends of God and man—did time and strength permit. But I must stop here, and postpone the consideration of the other two classes till next Friday evening, if we are spared and the Lord permit.

Now, do you belong to this class, or not? I have mentioned certain great fundamental facts, which when they exist, indicate the true character of individuals, by showing what is their main design and object in life. You can tell whether this is your character. When I come upon the other part of the subject, I shall endeavour to describe those classes of professing Christians, whose religious zeal, prayers and efforts have another design, and to show their character and how this design is carried out.

And now, beloved, I ask you before God, have you these characteristics of a child of God? Do you *know* they belong to you? Can you say, “O Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, and that these are the features of my character!”

## LEGAL RELIGION.

“Who is on the Lord’s side?”—EXODUS xxxii. 26.

LAST Friday evening, you will remember, that in discoursing from this text, I mentioned three classes of professors of religion; those who truly love God and man, those who are actuated solely by selfishness or at most by self-love in their religious duties, and those who are actuated only by a regard for public opinion. I also mentioned several characteristics of the first class, by which they may be known. This evening I intend to mention several characteristics of the second class,

THOSE PROFESSORS WHO ARE ACTUATED BY SELF-LOVE OR BY SELFISHNESS.

I design to show how their leading or main design in religion develops itself in their conduct. The conduct of men invariably shows what is their true and main design. A man’s character is as his supreme object is. And if you can learn by his conduct what that leading object is, then you can know with certainty what his character is. And I suppose this may generally be known by us with great certainty, if we would candidly and thoroughly observe their conduct.

These three classes of professors agree in many things, and it would be impossible to discriminate between them by an observation of these things only. But there are certain things in which they differ, and by *close* observation the difference will be seen in their conduct, from which we infer a difference in their character. And those points in which they differ belong to the very fundamentals of religion.

I will now proceed to mention some of the characteristics of the second class; those who are actuated in religion by self-love, or by selfishness, in whom hope and fear are the main springs of all they do in religion. And the things that I shall mention are such as, when they are seen, make it evident that the individual is actuated by a supreme regard to his own good, and

that the fear of evil, or the hope of advantage to himself, is the foundation of all his conduct.

They make religion a subordinate concern.

They show by their conduct that they do not regard religion as the principal business of life, but as subordinate to other things. They consider religion as something that ought to come in by the by, as something that ought to come in and find a place among other things, as a sort of Sabbath-day business, or something to be confined to the closet and the hour of family prayer and the Sabbath, and not as the grand business of life. They make a distinction between religious duty and business, and consider them as entirely separate concerns. Whereas, if they had right views of the matter, they would consider religion as the *only* business of life, and nothing else either lawful or worth pursuing, any further than as it promotes or subserves religion. If they had the right feeling, religion would characterize all that they do, and it would be manifest that every thing they do is an act of obedience to God, or an act of irreligion.

Their religious duties are performed as a task, and are not the result of the constraining love of God that burns within them.

Such a one does not delight in the exercise of religious affections, and as to communion with God, he knows nothing of it. He performs prayer as a task. He betakes himself to religious duties as sick persons take medicine, not because they love it, but because they hope to derive some benefit from it.

And here let me ask those who are present to-night, Do you *enjoy* religious exercises, or do you perform them because you hope to receive benefit by them? Be honest, now, and answer this question, just according to the truth, and see where you stand.

They manifestly possess a legal spirit, and not a gospel spirit.

They do rather what they are obliged to do, in religion, and not what they love to do. They have an eye to the commands of God, and yield obedience to his requirements, in performing religious duties, but do not engage in those things because they love them. They are always ready to inquire, in regard to duty, not so much how they can do good, as how they can be saved. There is just the difference between them, that there is between a convinced sinner and a true convert. The convinced sinner asks, "What *must* I do to be *saved*?" The true convert asks,

“Lord, what *wilt thou have me to do?*” So this class of professors are constantly asking, “What *must* I do to get to heaven?” and not “What *can* I do to get other people there?” The principal object of such a professor of religion is not to save the world, but to save himself.

They are actuated by fear much more than by hope.

They perform their religious duties chiefly because they *dare not* omit them. They go to the communion, not because they love to meet Christ, or because they love to commune with their brethren, but because they dare not stay away. They fear the censures of the church, or they are afraid they shall be damned if they neglect it. They perform their closet duties not because they enjoy communion with God, but because they dare not neglect them. They have the spirit of slaves, and go about the service of God, as slaves go about the service of their master, feeling that they are obliged to do about so much, or be beaten with many stripes. So these professors feel as if they were obliged to have about so much religion, and perform about so many religious duties, or be lashed by conscience and lose their hopes. And therefore they *go through*, painfully and laboriously enough, with about so many religious duties in a year, and that they call religion!

Their religion is not only produced by the fear of disgrace or the fear of hell, but it is *mostly of a negative character*.

They satisfy themselves, mostly, with doing nothing that is very bad. Having no spiritual views, they regard the law of God chiefly as a system of prohibitions, just to guard men from certain sins, and not as a system of benevolence fulfilled by love. And so, if they are moral in their conduct, and tolerably serious and decent in their general deportment, and perform the required amount of religious exercises, this satisfies them. Their conscience harasses them, not so much about sins of omission as sins of commission. They make a distinction between neglecting to do what God possibly requires, and doing what he positively forbids. The most you can say of them is, that they are not very bad. They seem to think little or nothing of being useful to the cause of Christ, so long as they cannot be convicted of any positive transgression.

This class of persons are more or less strict in religious duties, according to the light they have and the sharpness with which conscience pursues them.

Where they have enlightened minds and tender consciences, you often find them the most rigid of all professors. They tithe even to mint and annise. They are stiff even to moroseness. They are perfect pharisees, and carry everything to the greatest extremes, so far as outward strictness is concerned.

They are more or less miserable in proportion to the tenderness of their conscience.

With all their strictness, they cannot but be sensible that they are great sinners after all; and having no just sense of gospel justification, this leaves them very unhappy. And the more enlightened and tender their conscience, the more they are unhappy. Notwithstanding their strictness, they feel that they come short of their duty, and not having any gospel faith, nor any of that holy anointing of the Holy Spirit that brings peace to the soul, they are unsatisfied and uneasy and miserable.

Perhaps many of you have seen such persons. Perhaps some of you are such, and you never knew what it was to feel justified before God, through the blood of Jesus Christ, and you know nothing what it is to feel that Jesus Christ has accepted and owned you as his. You never felt in your minds what that is which is spoken of in this text, "There is now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Does such language bring home any warm and practical idea to you, that it is a reality because you experience it in your soul? Or do you, after all, still feel condemned and guilty, and have no sense of pardoned sin and no experimental peace with God or confidence in Jesus Christ?

This class of persons are encouraged and cheered by reading the accounts of ancient saints who fell into great sins.

They feel wonderfully instructed and edified when they hear the sins of God's people set forth in a strong light.—Then they are comforted and their hopes are wonderfully strengthened. Instead of feeling humbled and distressed, and feeling that such conduct is so contrary to all religion that they could hardly believe they were saints if it had not been found in the Bible, and that they could not believe at all that persons who should do such things under the light of the Christian dispensation, could be saints, they feel gratified and strengthened and their hopes confirmed by all these things. I once knew a man, an elder too, brought before the session of a church for the crime of adultery, and he actually excused himself by this plea. He did



not know, he said, why he should be expected to be better than David, the man after God's own heart.

They are always much better pleased, by how much the lower the standard of piety is held out from the pulpit.

If the minister adopts a low standard, and is ready charitably to hope that almost everybody is a Christian, they are pleased, and compliment him for his expansive charity, and praise him as such an excellent man, so charitable, &c. It is easy to see why this class of persons are pleased with such an exhibition of Christianity. It subserves their main design. It helps them to maintain what they call a "comfortable hope," notwithstanding they *do* so little for God. Right over against this, you will see, is the conduct of the man whose main design is to rid the world of SIN. He wants all men to be holy, and therefore he wants to have the true standard of holiness held up. He wants all men to be saved, but he knows they cannot be saved unless they are truly holy. And he would as soon think of Satan's going to heaven as of getting a man there by frittering away the Bible standard of holiness by "charity."

They are fond of having *comfortable* doctrines preached.

Such persons are apt to be fond of having the doctrine of saints' perseverance much dwelt on, and the doctrine of election. Often, they want nothing else but what they call the doctrines of grace. And if they can be preached in such an abstract way, as to afford them comfort without galling their consciences too much, then they are fed.

They love to have their minister preach sermons *to feed Christians*.

Their main object is not to save sinners, but to be saved themselves, and therefore they always choose a minister, not for his ability in preaching for the conversion of sinners, but for his talents in feeding the church with mere abstractions.

They lay great stress on having a *comfortable hope*.

You will hear them talking very solemnly about the importance of having a comfortable hope. If they can only enjoy their minds, they show very little solicitude whether anybody else around them is saved or not. If they can have only their fears silenced and their hopes cherished, they have religion enough to satisfy them.

Right over against this, you will find the true friends of God and man are thinking mainly of something else.—They are

trying to pull sinners out of the fire, and do not spend their energy in sustaining a comfortable hope for themselves.

In their prayers, you will find the class I am now speaking of, are praying mainly that their evidences may be brightened, and that they may feel assured that they are going to heaven, and know that they are accepted of God. Their great object is to secure their hopes, and so they pray that their evidences may be brightened, instead of praying that their faith may be strengthened, and their souls full of the Holy Ghost to pull sinners out of the fire.

They live very much on their own frames of mind.

They lay great stress on the particular emotions which they have from time to time. If at any time they have some high-wrought feelings of a religious nature, they dwell on them, and make this evidence last a great while. One such season of excitement will prop up their hopes as long as they can distinctly call it up to remembrance. No matter if they are not doing anything *now*, and are conscious they have no exercises of love to God now, they recollect the time when they had such and such feelings, and that answers to keep alive their hopes. If there has been a revival, and they mingled in its scenes until their imagination has been wrought up so that they could weep and pray and exhort with feeling, during the revival, that will last them a long time, and they will have a comfortable hope for years on the strength of it. Although, after the revival is over, they do nothing to promote religion, and their hearts are as hard as adamant, they have a very comfortable hope all the while, patiently waiting for a revival to come and give them another move.

Are any of you who are here now, propping yourselves up by your past frames and feelings, leaning on evidences, not from what you are *now doing* but something that you felt last year, or years ago? Let me tell you, that if you are thus living on past experience, you will find it will fail when you come to need it.

They pray almost exclusively for themselves.

If you could listen at the door of their closets, you would hear eight-tenths of all their petitions going up for themselves. It shows how they value their own salvation in comparison with the salvation of others. It is as eight to two. And if they pray in meetings, very often it will be just the same, and you would not suppose, from their prayers, that they knew there was a sinner

on earth travelling the road to hell. They pray for themselves just as they do in the closet, only they couple the rest of the church with them so as to say *we*.

Such persons pray to be fitted for death much more than they pray to be fitted to live a useful life.

They are more anxious to be prepared to die, than to be prepared to save sinners around them. If they ask for the Spirit of God, they want it to prepare them to die, more than as the Psalmist prayed, "Then will I teach transgressors thy way, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." How many of you are of this character? How many are there here, whose prayers are described exactly? An individual who made it his great absorbing object to do good and save sinners, would not be apt to think so much about when or where or how he shall die, as how he may do the most good while he lives. And as to his death, he leaves that all to God, and he is not afraid to leave it all with him. He has long ago given his soul up to him, and now the great question with him is not, when shall I die? but, how shall I live so as to honour God?

They are more afraid of punishment than they are of sin.

Precisely over against this, you will find the true friends of God and man more afraid of sin than of punishment.—It is not the question with them, "If I do this, shall I be punished?" or "If I do this, will God forgive me?" But the question is that which Joseph asked, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" There was the spirit of a child of God, afraid of sin more than punishment, and so much afraid of sin that he had no thought of punishment.

This class of persons I am speaking of, often indulge in sin if they can persuade themselves that God will forgive them, or when they think they can repent of it afterwards. They often reason in this way: "Such a minister does this," or "Such an elder or professor does this, and why may not I do the same?" There was a member of this church had a class in the Sabbath school; but seeing that others did not take a class, the individual reasoned in this way: "Why should I do it any more than they?" and so gave up the class. There is the spirit of this whole description of professors—"Others get along without doing such and such things, and why should I trouble myself to be better than they?" It is not sin that they fear, but punishment. They sin, **THEY KNOW**, but they hope to escape the

punishment. Who cannot see that this is contrary to the spirit of the true friends of God, whose absorbing object it is to get sin, and all sin, out of the world? Such persons are not half so much afraid of hell as they are of committing sin.

They feel and manifest greater anxiety about being saved themselves, than if all the world was going to hell.

Such a professor, if his hope begins to fail, wants to have everybody engaged to pray for *him*, and make a great ado, and move all the church, when he never thinks of doing any thing for the sinners around him, who are certainly on the road to hell. He shows that his mind is absorbed in himself, and that his main design is not to see how much good he can do.

They are more fond of receiving good than of doing good.

You may know such persons have not the spirit of the gospel. They have never entered into the spirit of Jesus Christ, when he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." A person actuated by true love to God and man, enjoys what he does to benefit others, far more than they do who receive good at his hand. He is really benevolent, and it is a gratification to him to show kindness, because his heart is set upon it, and when he can do it, a holy joy is shed over his mind, and he enjoys it exquisitely.

The other class are more eager to receive than to impart. They want to receive instruction more than to impart it. They want to receive comfort, but are never ready to deny themselves to give the comforts of the gospel to others. How directly contrary this is to the diffusive spirit of the gospel, any one can see at a glance. *That* spirit finds its supreme happiness in communicating happiness to others. But this class of persons want to lay everybody under contribution to impart happiness to themselves, instead of laying themselves out to bless others.

Who does not know these two classes of professors?—One always seeking out objects to do good to, the other always trying to gain good themselves. One anxious to communicate, the other to receive. One to do good, the other to get good. These two classes of characters are just as opposite as light and darkness.

If this class of professors are led to pray for the conversion and salvation of others, you may observe that they are actuated by the same kind of considerations as they are when they pray for themselves.

They are chiefly afraid of hell themselves, and when they are strongly convicted, they are afraid others will go there too. They are seeking happiness for themselves, and when self is not in the way, they seek the same for others. They pray for sinners, not because they have such a sense of the evil of sin which sinners are committing, as because they have such a sense of the terrors of hell to which sinners are going. It is not because sinners dishonour God that they want them converted, but because they are in danger. Their great object in praying is to secure the safety of those they pray for, as it is their great object in religion to secure their own safety. They pity themselves and they pity others. If there was no danger, they would have no motive to pray either for themselves or others.

The true friends of God and man feel compassion for sinners too, but they feel much more for the honour of God. They are more distressed to see God abused and dishonoured than to see sinners go to hell. And if God must be for ever dishonoured or men go to hell—just as certainly as they love God supremely, they will decide that sinners shall sink to endless torments sooner than God fail of his due honour. And they manifest their true feelings in their prayers. You hear them praying for sinners as rebels against God, as guilty criminals deserving of eternal wrath, as the enemies of God and the universe; and while they are full of compassion for sinners, they feel also the enkindlings of holy indignation against them for their conduct towards the blessed God.

This class of professors I am speaking of are very apt to be distressed with doubts.

They are apt to talk a great deal about their doubts. This makes up a great part of their history, the detail of their doubts. The great thing with them being the enjoyment of a comfortable hope, as soon as they begin to doubt, it is all over with them, and so they make a great ado with their doubts, and then they are not prepared to do anything for religion because they have these doubts. The true friends of God and man, being engaged in doing good, if the devil at any time suggests that they are going to hell, the first answer they think of is, "What if I should? only let me pull sinners out of the fire while I can." I suppose a real Christian may have doubts. But they are much less apt to have them, by how much the more they are fully bent

on saving sinners. It will be very hard work for Satan to get a church who are fully engaged in the work to be much troubled with doubts. Their attention is not on that, but on something else, and he cannot get the advantage over them.

They manifest great uneasiness at the increasing calls for self-denial to do good.

Said an individual, "What will this Temperance Reformation come to? At first they only went against ardent spirit, and I gave up that, and did very well without it. Then they called on us to give up wine, and now they are calling on us to give up our tea and coffee, and where will it end?" This class of persons are in constant distress at being called on to give up so much. The good that is to be done does not enter into their thoughts, because they are all the while dwelling on what they have to give up.

It is easily seen why it is that these aggressive movements on the kingdom of darkness distress such persons. Their object never was to search out and banish from this world everything that is dishonourable to God or injurious to man. They never entered upon religion with the determination to clear out every such thing from the earth, as far as they had the power, and as fast as they were convinced that it was injurious to themselves or others, in soul or body. And therefore they are distressed by the movements of those who are truly engaged to search out and clear away every evil.

These persons are annoyed by the continually increasing calls to give for missions, Bibles, tracts, and the like. The time was, when if a rich man gave 25 dollars a year to such things, he was thought to be doing pretty well. But now there are so many calls for subscriptions and contributions, that they are in torment all the time. "I don't like these contributions; I am opposed to having contributions taken up in the congregation; I think they do hurt." They feel specially sore at these agents. "I don't know about these beggars that are going about." They are obliged to keep giving all the time, in order to keep up their character, or to have any hope, but they are much distressed about it, and don't know what the world is coming to, things are in such a strange pass.

As you raise the general standard of living in the church, this class of professors have to come up too, lest their hopes should

be shaken. And the common standard of professors has been raised already so much, that I have no doubt it costs this class of persons now four times as much of what they call religion, to keep up a hope, as it did twenty years ago. And what will become of them, if there are to be so many new movements and new measures, and so much done to save the world? The Lord help them, for they are in great distress.

When they are called upon to exercise self-denial for the sake of doing good, instead of being a pleasant thing, it gives them unmingled pain.

Such a one does not know anything about enjoying self-denial. He cannot understand how self-denial is pleasant, or how anybody can take pleasure in it, or have joy of heart in denying himself for the sake of doing good to others. That he thinks is a height in religion which he has not attained to. Yet the true friend of God and man, whose heart is fully set to do good, never enjoys any money he expends so well as that which he gives to promote Christ's kingdom. If he is really pious, he knows that is the best disposition he can make of his money. Nay, he is sorry to be obliged to use money for anything else, when there are so many opportunities to do good with it.

I want you who are here to look at this. It is easy to see that if an individual has his heart very much set upon any thing, all the money he can save for that object is most pleasing to him, and the more he can save from other objects for this that his heart is set on, the better he is pleased. If an individual finds it hard for him to give money for religious objects, it is easy to see that his heart is not set on it. If it were, he would have given his money with joy. What would you think of a man who should set himself against giving money for the advancement of religion, and get up an excitement in the church about the missionary cause, and having so many calls for money, when he had never given five dollars? It would be absolute demonstration that his heart was not truly set on the cause of Christ. If it was, he would give his money for it, as free as water. And the more he could spare for it the better he would be pleased.

This class of persons are not forward in promoting revivals.

This is not their great object. They always have to be dragged into the work. When a revival has begun, and gone on, and the excitement is great, then they come in and appear to be

engaged in it. But you never see them taking the lead, or striking out ahead of the rest, and saying to the rest of the brethren, Come on, and let us do something for the Lord.

As a matter of fact, they do not convert sinners to God.

They may be instrumental of good, in various ways, and so may Satan be instrumental of good. But as a general thing, they do not pull sinners out of the fire. And the reason is, that this is not their great object. How is it with you? Do you absolutely succeed in converting sinners? Is there any one who will look to you as the instrument of his conversion? If you were truly engaged for this, you could not rest satisfied without doing it, and you would go about it so much in earnest, and with such agonizing prayer, that you would do it.

They do not manifest much distress when they behold sin.

They do not rebuke it. They love to mingle in scenes where sin is committed. They love to be where they can hear vain conversation, and even to join in it. They love worldly company and worldly books. Their spirit is worldly. Instead of hating even the garment spotted with the flesh, they love to hang around the confines of sin, as if they had complacency in it.

They take but very little interest in published accounts of revivals, missions, &c.

If any of the missions are tried severely, they neither know nor feel it. If missions prosper, they never know it, they take no interest in it. Very likely they do not take any religious paper whatever. Or if they do, when they sit down to read it, if they come to a revival, they pass it over, to read the secular news, or the controversy, or something else. The other class, the true friends of God and man, on the contrary, love to learn the progress of revivals. They love to read a religious paper, and when they take it up, the first thing they do is to run their eye over it to find where there are revivals, and there they feast their souls and give glory to God. And so with missions, their heart goes forth with the missionaries, and when they hear that the Lord has poured forth his Spirit on a mission, they feel a glow of holy joy thrill through them.

They do not aim at anything higher than a legal, painful, negative religion.

The love of Christ does not constrain them to a constant warfare against sin, and a constant watch to do all the good in



their power. But what they do is done only because they think they must. And they maintain a kind of piety that is formal, heartless, worthless.

They come reluctantly into all the special movements of the church for doing good.

If a protracted meeting is proposed, you will generally find this class of persons hanging back, and making objections, and raising difficulties as long as they can. If any other special effort is proposed, they come reluctantly, and prefer the good old way. They feel sore at being obliged to add so much every year to their religion in order to maintain their hope.

They do not enjoy secret prayer.

They do not pray in their closets because they *love* to pray, but because they think it is their duty, and they dare not neglect it.

They do not enjoy the Bible.

They do not read the Bible because it is sweet to their souls, sweeter than honey or the honey comb. They do not *enjoy* the reading as a person enjoys the most exquisite delights. They read it because it is their duty to read it, and it would not do to profess to be a Christian and not read the Bible, but in fact they find it a dry book.

They do not enjoy prayer meetings.

Slight excuses keep them away. They never go unless they find it necessary for the sake of keeping up appearances, or to maintain their hope. And when they do go, instead of having their souls melted and fired with love, they are cold, listless, dull, and glad when it is over.

They are very much put to it to understand what is meant by disinterestedness.

To serve God because they love him, and not for the sake of the reward, is what they do not understand.

Their thoughts are not anxiously fixed upon the question, When shall the world be converted to God?

Their hearts are not agonized with such thoughts as this, O, how long shall wickedness prevail? O, when shall this wretched world be rid of sin and death? O, when shall men cease to sin against God? They think much more of the question, When shall I die and go to heaven, and get rid of all my trials and cares?

But I find I am again obliged to omit the examination of the

last class of professors till next Friday evening, when, with the leave of Providence, it will be attended to.

## REMARKS.

I believe you will not think me extravagant, when I say that the religion I have described, appears to be the religion of a very large mass in the church.

To say the least, it is greatly to be feared that a *majority* of professing Christians are of this description. To say this is neither uncharitable nor censorious.

This religion is *radically defective*.

There is nothing of true Christianity in it. It differs as much from Christianity as much as the Pharisees differed from Christ—as much as gospel religion differs from legal religion.

Now, let me ask you, to which of these classes do you belong? Or are you in neither? It may be that because you are conscientious you do not belong to the second class, you may think you belong to the first, when in fact you will find, when I come to describe the third class of professors, that that is your true character.

How important it is that you know for a certainty what is your true character—whether you are actuated in religion by true love to God and man, or whether you are religious only out of regard to yourself. O, what a solemn thought, if this church, of which I have been the pastor, have never come to an intelligent decision of the question, whether they are the true friends of God and man or not. Do settle it, beloved. Now is the time. Settle this, and then go to work for God.

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## DISHONESTY IN SMALL MATTERS INCONSISTENT WITH HONESTY IN ANY- THING.

“ He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”—LUKE xvi. 10.

THESE words are a part of the parable of the unjust steward, or rather, a principle which our Lord lays down in connection with the parable. The words do not require that I should go into an explanation of the parable itself, as they make no part of the story which the Lord Jesus was relating. The *principle* involved or laid down, is what I have to do with to-night. In preaching from these words I design to illustrate the principle laid down, which is this :

ONE WHO IS DISHONEST IN SMALL MATTERS, IS NOT REALLY HONEST IN ANYTHING.

The order which I shall pursue is the following:—I shall show what I do not mean by this principle.—Show what I do mean by it.—Prove the principle, that one who is dishonest in small matters is not really honest at all.—Show by what principle those individuals are governed who, while they are dishonest in small things, appear to be honest, and even religious, in larger affairs.—Mention several instances where persons often manifest a want of principle in small matters.

I am to show what I do not mean by the principle, that one who is dishonest in small matters is not really honest in anything.

Answer. I do not mean that if a person is dishonest in small matters, and will take little advantages in dealing, it is therefore certain that in greater matters he will not deal openly and honourably according to the rules of business.

Or that it is certain, if a man will commit petty thefts and depredations, that he will commit highway robbery. There may be various reasons why a man who will commit such depredations will not go into more daring and outrageous crimes.

Or that if a man indulges unclean thoughts, it is certain he will commit adultery.

Or that if he indulges covetous desires it is certain he will steal.

Or that if he indulges in ill-will towards any one, he will commit murder,

Or that if he would enslave a fellow man, and deprive him of instruction and of all the rights of man, he will certainly commit other crimes of equal enormity.

Or that if he will defraud the government in little things, such as postage, or duties on little articles, he will rob the treasury.

I am to explain what I do mean by the principle laid down, that if a man is dishonest in little things, he is not really honest in anything.

What I mean is, that if a man is dishonest in small matters, it shows that he is not governed *by principle* in anything. It is therefore certain that it is not real honesty of heart which leads him to act right in greater matters. He must have other motives than honesty of heart, if he appears to act honestly in larger things, while he acts dishonestly in small matters.

I am to prove the principle.

I am not going to take it for granted, although the Lord Jesus Christ expressly declares it. I design to mention several considerations in addition to the force of the text. I believe it is a general impression that a person may be honest in greater matters, and deserve the character of honesty, notwithstanding he is guilty of dishonesty in small matters.

If he was actuated by a supreme regard to the authority of God, and if this was the habitual state of his mind, such a state of mind would be quite as apt to manifest itself in smaller matters as in large. Nay, where the temptation is small, he would be more certain to act conscientiously than in greater matters, because there is less to induce him to act otherwise. What is honesty? If a man has no other motives for acting honestly than mere selfishness, the devil is as honest as he is; for I dare say he is honest with his fellow devils, as far as it is for his interest or *policy* to be so. Is that honesty? Certainly not. And, therefore, if a man does not act honestly from higher motives than this, he is not honest at all, and if he appears to be honest in certain important matters, he has other motives than a regard to the honour of God.

It is certain that, if an individual is dishonest in small matters, he is not actuated by love to God. If he was actuated by love to God, he would feel that dishonesty in small matters is just as inconsistent as in great. It is as real a violation of the law of God, and one who truly loves God would no more act dishonestly in one than in the other.

It is certain that he is not actuated by real love to his neighbour, such as the law of God requires. If he loved his neighbour as himself, he would not defraud him in small things any more than in great. Nay, he might do it in great things, where the temptation to swerve from his integrity was powerful. But where the temptation is small, it cannot be that one who truly loves his neighbour would act dishonestly. See the case of Job. Job truly loved God, and you see how far he went, and what distress he endured, before he would say a word that even seemed disparaging or complaining of God. And when the temptation was overwhelming, and he could see no reason why he should be so afflicted, and his distress became intolerable, and his soul was all in darkness, and his wife set in and told him to curse God and die, he would not do it then, but said, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? Do you suppose Job would have swerved from his integrity in little things, or for small temptations? Never. He loved God. And if you find a man who truly loves his neighbour, you will not see him deceiving or defrauding his neighbour for trifling temptations.

I am to examine some of the motives by which a person may be actuated, who is dishonest in little things, while he may appear to be honest in greater matters.

Our business here is to ascertain how this apparent discrepancy can consist with the declaration in the text. The Lord Jesus Christ has laid down the principle, that if a man is dishonest in small matters, he is not strictly honest at all. Now, here are facts, which to many appear to contradict this. We see many men that in small matters exhibit a great want of principle, and appear to be quite void of principle, while in larger things they appear to be honourable and even pious. This must be consistent, or else Jesus Christ has affirmed a falsehood. That it is consistent with truth will be admitted, if we can show that their conduct in regard to larger matters can be accounted for

on other principles than honesty of heart. If we can account for it on principles of mere selfishness, it will be admitted, that where a man is dishonest in small things, he is not really honest at all, however honestly he may act in regard to larger matters.

They may act honestly in larger matters for fear of disgrace.

They may know that certain small things are not likely to be mentioned in public, or to have a noise made about them, and so they may do such things, while the fear of disgrace deters them from doing the same things in regard to larger matters, because it will make a noise. What is this but one form of selfishness overbalancing another form? It is selfishness still, not honesty.

He may suppose it will injure his business, if he is guilty of dishonesty with men of business, and so he deals honestly in important matters, while in little things he is ready to take any advantage he can, that will not injure his business. Thus a man will take advantage of a seamstress, and pay her a few cents less than he knows it is really worth for making a garment, while the same individual, in buying a *bale* of goods, would not think of showing a disposition to cheat, because it would injure his business. In dealing with an abused and humble individual, he can gripe and screw out a few cents without fear of public disgrace, while he would not for any consideration do an act which would be publicly spoken of as disreputable and base.

Fear of human law may influence a man to act honestly in such things as are likely to be taken up, while in such small matters as the law is not likely to notice, he will defraud or take advantage.

The love of praise influences many to act honestly and honourably, and even piously, in matters that are likely to be noticed. Many a man will defraud a poor person out of a few cents in the price of labour, and then, in some great matter on public occasion, appear to act with great liberality. What is the reason, that individuals who habitually screw down their servants, and seamstresses, and other poor people whom they employ, to the lowest penny, and take all the advantage they can of such people, will then, if a severe winter comes, send out cart loads of fuel to the poor, or give hundreds of dollars to the committees? You see that it is for the love of praise, and not the love of God nor the love of man.

The fear of God. He may be afraid of the divine wrath, if

he commits dishonest acts of importance, while he supposes God will overlook little things, and not notice it if he is dishonest in such small matters.

He may restrain his dishonest propensities from mere self-righteousness, and act honestly in great things for the sake of bolstering up his own good opinion of himself, while in little things he will cheat and play the knave.

I said in the beginning, that I did not mean, that if a man would take small advantages, he would certainly never act with apparent uprightness. It often comes to pass, that individuals who act with great meanness and dishonesty in small affairs, will act uprightly and honourably, on the ground that their character and interest are at stake. Many a man who among merchants is looked upon as an honourable dealer, is well known, by those who are more intimately acquainted with him, to be mean and knavish and overreaching in smaller matters, or in his dealings with more humble and more dependent individuals. It is plain that it is not real honesty of heart, which makes him act with apparent honesty in his more public transactions.

So I said, that if an individual will commit petty thefts, it is not certain he would commit highway robbery. He might have various reasons for abstaining, without having a particle too much honesty to rob on the highway, or to cut a purse out of your pocket in the crowd. The individual may not have courage enough to break out in highway robbery, or not skill enough, or nerve enough, or he may be afraid of the law, or afraid of disgrace, or other reasons.

An individual may indulge unclean thoughts, habitually, and yet never actually commit adultery. He may be restrained by fear, or want of opportunity, and not by principle. If he *indulges* unclean thoughts, he would certainly act uncleanly, if it were not for other reasons than purity of principle.

An individual may manifest a covetous spirit, and yet not steal. But he has the spirit that would lead him to steal, if not restrained by other reasons than honesty or principle.

A man may be angry, and yet his anger never break out in murder. But his hatred would lead him to do it, so far as principle is concerned. And if it is not done, it is for other reasons than true principle.

An individual may oppress his fellow man, enslave him, deprive him of instruction, and compel him to labour without com-

pensation, for his own benefit, and yet not commit murder, or go to Africa to engage in the slave trade, because it would endanger his reputation or his life. But if he will do that which divests life of all that is desirable to gratify his own pride or promote his own interest, it cannot be principle, either of love to God or love to man, that keeps him from going any length, if his interest requires it. If a man, from regard to his own selfish interest will take a course towards any human being which will deprive him of all that renders life desirable, it is easy to see that, so far as principle is concerned, there is nothing in the way of his doing it by violence on the coast of Africa, or taking life itself, when his interest requires it.

So an individual who will defraud the United States' treasury of eighteen cents in postage, has none too much principle to rob the treasury, if he had the same prospect of impunity. The same principle that allowed him to do the one, would allow him to do the other. And the same motive that led him to do the one, would lead him to do the other if he had an opportunity, and if it were not counteracted by some other motive equally selfish.

A man may, in like manner, be guilty of little misrepresentations, who would not dare to tell a downright *lie*. Yet if he is guilty of colouring the truth, and misrepresenting facts, with a design to deceive, or to make facts appear otherwise than they really are, he is really lying, and the individual who will do this would manufacture ever so many lies, if it was for his interest, or were he not restrained by other reasons than a sacred regard to truth.

I will mention some instances, where persons are dishonest in small matters, while they appear to act honestly and even piously in regard to matters of greater importance.

We often find individuals manifesting a great want of principle in regard to the payment of small debts, while they are extremely careful and punctual in the payment of notes in the bank, and in all their commercial transactions.

For instance, there is a man takes a newspaper, the price is only a small sum, and the publisher cannot send a collector to every individual, so this man lets his subscription lie along perhaps for years, and perhaps never pays it. The same individual, if it had been a note at the bank, would have been punctual enough; and no pains would have been spared, rather than let the note run beyond the day. Why? Because if he does not



pay his note in the bank, it will be protested, and his credit will be injured, but the little debt of twenty shillings or five dollars will not be protested, and he knows it, and so he lets it go by, and the publisher has to be at the trouble and expense of sending for it, or go without his money. How manifest it is that this man does not pay his notes at the bank from honesty of principle, but purely from a regard to his own credit and interest.

I have before referred to the case of seamstresses. Suppose an individual employs women to sew for him, and for the sake of underselling others in the same trade, he beats down these women below the just price of such work. It is manifest that the individual is not honest in anything. If, for the sake of making more profits, or of underselling, he will beat down these women—suppose he is honourable and prompt in his public transactions—no thanks to him, it is not because he is honest in his heart, but because it is his interest to seem so.

Some manifest this want of principle by committing little petty thefts. If they live at a boarding house, where there are boarders, they will commit petty thefts, perhaps, for fuel in the cellar. An individual will not be at the expense of getting a little charcoal for himself, to kindle his fire in the morning, but gets along by pilfering from the stores laid in by others, a handful at a time. Now the individual that will do that, shows himself to be radically rotten at heart.

A case once came to my knowledge, of this kind. An individual was sitting in a room, where the gentleman had on the table for some purpose a tumbler of wine and a pitcher of water. The gentleman had occasion to go out of the room a moment, but accidentally left the door a-jar, and while he was out, looking back he saw this individual drink a part of the wine in the tumbler, and then to conceal it, fill up the tumbler with water, and take his seat. Now, the individual who did that showed that he loved wine, and that he was none too good to steal; he showed that so far as principle was concerned, he would get drunk if he had the means, and steal if he had a chance; in fact, at heart, he was both a drunkard and a thief.

Individuals often manifest great dishonesty when they find articles that have been lost, especially articles of small value. One will find a penknife, perhaps, or a pencil case, and never make the least inquiry, even among those he has reason to believe were the losers. Now, the man that would find a penknife, and keep it without making inquiry, where there was any pros-

pect of finding the owner, so far as principle is concerned, would keep a pocket-book full of bank notes, if he should find it and have an equal chance of concealment. And yet this same individual, if he should find a pocket-book with five thousand dollars in it, would advertise it in the newspapers, and make a great noise, and profess to be wonderfully honest. But what is his motive? He knows that the five thousand dollars will be inquired after, and if he is discovered to have concealed it, he shall be ruined. Fine honesty, this!

Many individuals conceal little mistakes that are made in their favour, in reckoning, or in giving change. If an individual would keep still, say nothing, and let it pass, when such a mistake is made in his favour, it is manifest that nothing but a want of opportunity and impunity would prevent him from taking any advantage whatever, or overreaching to any extent.

*Frauds on the Post Office* are of the same class.

Who does not know that there is a great deal of dishonesty practised here. Some seem to think there is no dishonesty in cheating the government out of a little postage. Postmasters will frank letters that they have no right to. Many will frank letters not only for their families but for their neighbours, all directly contrary to law, and a fraud upon the Post Office. The man that will do that is not honest. What would not such a man do, if he had the same prospect of impunity in other frauds, that he has in this?

*Smuggling* is a common form of petty dishonesty. How many a man will contrive to smuggle little articles in his trunk, when he comes home from England, that he knows ought to pay duty to the custom house, and he thinks but little of it, because the sum is so small, whereas, the smaller the sum, the more clearly the principle is developed. *Because* the temptation is so small, it shows how weak is the man's principle of honesty, that can be overcome by such a trifle. The man that would do this, if he had the same opportunity, would smuggle a cargo. If, for so little, he will lose sight of his integrity, and do a dishonest act, he is not too good to rob the treasury.

#### REMARKS.

The real state of a man's heart is often more manifested in smaller matters than in business of greater moment.

Men are often deceived here, and think their being honest in

greater things will go to prove their honesty of heart, notwithstanding their knavishness in smaller things, and so they are sure to be on their guard in great things, while they are careless of little matters, and so act out their true character. They overlook the fact, that all their honesty in larger matters springs from a wrong principle, from a desire to *appear* honest, and not from a determination to *be* honest. They overlook their own petty frauds, because they guard their more public manifestations of character, and then take it for granted that they are honest, while they are nothing but rottenness at heart. The man who will take advantage in little things, where he is not watched, is not actuated by principle. If you want to know your real character, watch your hearts, and see how your principles develop themselves in little things.

For instance, suppose you are an eye-servant. You are employed in the service of another, and you do not mind being idle at times, for a short time, in the absence of your employer. Or you slight your work when not under the eye of your employer, as you would not if he was present. The man who will do this is totally dishonest, and not to be trusted in anything, and very likely would take money from his employer's pocket book, if it were not for the fear of detection, or some other equally selfish motive. Such a person is not to be trusted at all, except in circumstances where it is his interest to be honest.

Mechanics that slight their work when it will not be seen or known by their employer, are rotten at heart, and not to be trusted at all, any farther than you can make it for their interest to be honest.

Persons who will knowingly mis-state facts in conversation, would bear false witness in court under oath, if favoured with opportunity and impunity. They never tell the truth at all because it is truth, or from the love of truth. Let no such men be trusted.

Those who are unchaste in conversation would be unchaste in conduct, if they had opportunity and impunity.—Spurn the man or woman who will be impure in speech, even among their own sex; they have no principle at all, and are not to be trusted *on the ground of their principles*. If persons are chaste from principle, they will no more indulge in unclean conversation than unclean actions. They will abhor even the garment spotted with the flesh.

The individual who will indulge in any one sin, does not abstain from any sin because it is sin.

If he hated sin, and was opposed to sin because it is sin, he would no more indulge in one sin than another. If a person goes to pick and choose among sins, avoiding some, and practising others, it is certain that it is not because he regards the authority of God, or hates sin, that he abstains from any sin whatever.

Those individuals who will not abandon all intoxicating drinks for the purpose of promoting temperance, never gave up ardent spirits for the sake of promoting temperance.

It is manifest that they gave up ardent spirits from some other consideration than a regard to the temperance cause. If that had been their object, they would give up alcohol in all its forms, and when they find that there is alcohol in wine and beer and cider, they would give them up of course. Why not?

The man who, for the sake of gain, will sell rum, or intoxicating drinks, to his neighbour, and put a cup to his neighbour's mouth, and would thus consent to ruin him, soul and body, would consent to sell his neighbour into slavery to promote his own selfish interests, if he could do it with impunity. And if he did not rob and murder him for the sake of his money, it certainly would not be because the love of God or of man restrained him. If the love of self is so strong, that he will consent to do his neighbour the direct injury of selling him ardent spirits, nothing but selfishness under some other form, prevailing over the love of money, could prevent his selling men into slavery, robbing, or murdering them, to get their money. He might love his own reputation; he might fear the penalty of human law; he might fear the destruction of his own soul, so much as to restrain him from these acts of outrage and violence. But certainly it could not be the principle of love to God or man that would restrain him.

The individual who will enslave his fellow men for his own selfish objects, would enslave others, any or all, if his interest demanded, and if he had the same opportunity.

If a man will appropriate the rights of one, he would appropriate the rights of all men, if he could do it with impunity. The individual who will deprive a black man of his liberty, and enslave him, would make no scruple to enslave a white man, if circumstances were equally favourable. The man who contends

that the black labourer of the south ought to be held in slavery, if he dared, would contend to have the white labourers of the north enslaved, and would urge the same kind of arguments, that the peace and order of society requires it, and labourers are so much better off when they have a master to take care of them. The famous Bible argument too, is as good in favour of white slaves as blacks, if you only had the *power* to carry it out. The man who *holds* his fellow man as property, would *take* his fellow man as property, if he could with impunity. The principle is the same in all. It is not principle that keeps men who hold slaves from kidnapping on the coast of Africa, or from making war to enslave the free labourers of the north.

The man that will not practise self-denial in little things to promote religion, would not endure persecution for the sake of promoting religion.

Those who will not deny their appetite would not endure the scourge and the stake. Perhaps, if persecution were to arise, some might endure it for the sake of the applause it would bring, or to show their spirit, and to face opposition. There is a natural spirit of obstinacy, which is often roused by opposition, that would go to the stake rather than yield a point. But it is easily seen, that it is not true love to the cause which prompts a man to endure opposition, if he will not endure self-denial in little things for the sake of the cause.

Little circumstances often discover the state of the heart.

The individual that we find delinquent in small matters, we of course infer would be much more so in larger affairs, if circumstances were equally favourable.

Where you find persons wearing little ornaments from vanity, set them down as rotten at heart. If they could, they would go all lengths in display, if they were not restrained by some other considerations than a regard to the authority of God and the honour of religion. You may see this every day in the streets. Men walking with their cloaks very carefully thrown over their shoulders so as to show the velvet, and women with their feathers tossing in the air—it is astonishing how many ways there are in which these little things show their pride and rottenness of heart.

You say these are little things. I know they are little things, and *because they are* little things, I mention them. It is because they are little things, that they show the character so clearly.

If their pride was not deeply rooted, they would not show it in little things. If a man had it put in his power to live in a palace, with every thing corresponding, it would be no wonder if he should give way to the temptation. But when his vanity shows itself in little things, he gives full evidence that it has possession of his soul.

How important it is for you to see this, and to keep a watch over these little things, so as to see what you are, and to know your characters, as they appear in the sight of God.

How important to cultivate the strictest integrity, such as will carry itself out in small things as well as in large. There is something so beautiful, when you see an individual acting in little things with the same careful and conscientious uprightness as in matters of the greatest moment. Until professors of religion will cultivate this universal honesty, they will always be a reproach to religion.

Oh, how much would be gained, if professors of religion would evince that entire purity and honesty on all occasions and to all persons, and do what is just right, so as to commend religion to the ungodly. How often do sinners fix their eye on some petty delinquencies of professors of religion, and look with amazement at such things in persons who profess the fear of God. What an everlasting reproach to religion, that so many of its professors are guilty of these little, mean, paltry knaveries. The wicked have cause enough to see, that such professors cannot have any *principle* of honesty, and that such religion as they exhibit is good for nothing, and is not worth having.

Of what use is it for that woman to talk to her impenitent servant about religion, when her servant knows that she will not hesitate to overreach and screw down and cheat in petty things? Or for that merchant to talk to his clerks, who know that however honourable he may be in his greater and more public transactions, he is mean and knavish in little things? It is worse than useless.

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## THE IMPERATIVE NECESSITY OF KNOWING YOUR TRUE CHARACTER.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”  
2 CORINTHIANS xiii. 5.

**I**N speaking from this text I design to show what is intended by the requirement in the text.—The necessity of this requirement.—The practicability of the duty enjoined.—Give some directions as to the manner of performing the duty.

I. I am to show what is intended by the requirement in the text, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.”

It requires that we should understand our own hearts, that we should take the proper steps to make proof of our real characters, as they appear in the sight of God. It refers not to a trial or a proof of our strength, or knowledge, but our moral character, that we should thoroughly test it, so as to understand it as it is. It implies that we should know how God regards us, and what he thinks of us, whether he considers us saints or sinners. It is nothing less than a positive command, that we should ascertain our own true character, and settle the question definitively for ourselves, whether we are saints or sinners, heirs of heaven or heirs of hell.

II. I am to show the necessity of this requirement.

It is indispensable to our own peace of mind, that we should prove and ascertain our true character, as it is in the sight of God.

The individual who is uncertain as to his real character, can have no such thing as settled peace of mind. He may have apathy, more or less complete and perfect, but apathy is very different from peace. And very few professors of religion, or persons who continue to hear the gospel, can have such apathy for any length of time, as to suppress all uneasy feelings, at being uncertain respecting their true character and destiny. I

am not speaking of hypocrites, who have seared their consciences, or of scoffers who may be given up of God. But in regard to others, it is strictly true that they must have this question settled in order to enjoy peace of mind.

It is essential to Christian Honesty.

A man who is not truly settled in his mind as to his own character is hardly honest in religion. If he makes a profession of religion when he does not honestly believe himself a saint, who does not know that that is not exactly honest? He is half a hypocrite, at heart. So when he prays, he is always in doubt whether his prayers are acceptable, as coming from a child of God.

A just knowledge of one's own character is indispensable to usefulness.

If a person has always to agitate this question in his mind, "Am I a Christian?"—if he has to be always anxiously looking at his own estate all the while, and doubtful how he stands, it must be a great hindrance to his usefulness. If when he speaks to sinners, he is uncertain whether he is not himself a sinner, he cannot exhort with that confidence and simplicity that he could if he felt his own feet on a rock. It is a favourite idea with some people, that it is best for saints to be always in the dark, to keep them humble. Just as if it was calculated to make a child of God proud to know that *he is* a child of God. Whereas, one of the most weighty considerations in the universe to keep him from dishonouring God is, to know that he is a child of God. When a person is in an anxious state of mind, he can have but little faith, and his usefulness cannot be extensive till the question is settled.

III. The practicability of this requirement.

It is a favourite idea with some, that in this world the question never can be settled. It is amazing what a number of persons there are, that seem to make a virtue of their great doubts, which they always have, whether they are Christians. For hundreds of years it has been looked upon by many as a suspicious circumstance, if a professor of religion is not filled with doubts. It is considered as almost a certain sign he knows nothing of his own heart. One of the universal questions put to candidates for admission has been, "Have you any doubts of your good estate?" And if the candidate answers, "O, yes, I have great doubts," that is all very well, and is taken as *evidence* that he is



spiritual, and has a deep acquaintance with his own heart, and has a great deal of humility. But if he has no doubts, it is taken as evidence that he knows little of his own heart, and is most probably a hypocrite. Over against all this, I maintain that the duty enjoined in the text is a practicable duty, and that Christians can put themselves to such a proof, as to know their own selves, and have a satisfactory assurance of their real character.

This is evident from the command in the text, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves." Will any one believe that God requires us to examine ourselves, and prove ourselves, and see what is our true character, when he knows it to be impossible for us ever *to learn* our true character?

We have the best possible medium of proof, to try ourselves, and prove our character, and that is our *consciousness*.

Consciousness gives the highest possible certainty as to the facts by which our characters are to be determined, and the great question is settled, What is our state before God? We may have, and ought to have, the same kind of evidence of our state before God as we have of our existence; and that is, consciousness. Nay, we cannot help *having* the evidence. Consciousness is continually testifying what are our states of mind, and it only needs for us to take notice of what consciousness testifies, and we can settle the question as certainly as we can our own existence.

God gives men such constant opportunities to act out what is in their hearts, that nothing but negligence can prevent their coming to a decision of the matter.

If men were shut up in dungeons, where they had no opportunity to act, and no chance of being influenced by circumstances, and no way to develop the state of their hearts, they would not be so much to blame for not knowing themselves. But God has placed them in the circumstances in which they are in this life on purpose, as he said to the children of Israel, to prove them, and to know what is in their hearts, and whether they will keep his commandments or no. The things around us must produce an impression on our minds, and lead us to feel and act in some way. And this affords opportunities of self-knowledge, when we see how we feel and how we are inclined to act in such diversified circumstances.

We are further qualified to trust our own true characters, by having a perfect rule to try them by.

The law of God is a true standard by which to try our characters. We know exactly what that is, and we have therefore an infallible and an invariable rule by which to judge of ourselves. We can bring all our feelings and actions to this rule, and compare them with this standard, and know exactly what is their true character in the sight of God, for God himself tries them by the same standard.

Our circumstances are such that nothing but dishonesty can possibly lead us to self-deception.

The individual who is self-deceived is not only careless and negligent, but decidedly dishonest, or he would not deceive himself. He must be to a great degree prejudiced by pride, and blinded by self-will, or he could not but know that he is not what he professes to be. The circumstances are so many and so various, that call forth the exercises of his mind, that it must be wilful blindness that is deceived. If they never had any opportunities to act, or if circumstances did not call forth their feelings, they might be ignorant. A person who had never seen a beggar, might not be able to tell what were his true feelings towards beggars. But place him where he meets beggars every day, and he must be wilfully blind or dishonest, if he does not know the temper of his heart towards a beggar.

IV. I will mention a few things as to the manner of performing this duty.

*First.* Negatively.

It is not done by waiting for evidence to come to us.

Many seem to wait, in a passive attitude, for the evidence to come to them, to decide whether they are Christians or not. They appear to be waiting for certain feelings to come to them. Perhaps they pray about it; perhaps they pray very earnestly, and then wait for the feelings to come which will afford them satisfactory evidence of their good estate. Many times they will not do any thing in religion till they get this evidence, and they sit and wait, and wait, in vain expectation that the Spirit of God will come some time or other, and lift them out of this slough, while they remain thus passive and stupid. They may wait till doomsday and never get it in this way.

Not by any direct attempt to force the feelings into exercise which are to afford the evidence.

The human mind is so constituted, that it never will feel by trying to feel. You may try as hard as you please, to feel in a particular way. Your efforts to put forth feelings are totally unphilosophical and absurd. There is now nothing before the mind to produce emotion or feeling. Feeling is always awakened in the mind by the mind's being intensely fixed on some object calculated to awaken feeling. But when the mind is fixed, not upon the object, but on direct attempts to put forth feeling, this will not awaken feeling. It is impossible. The attention must be taken up with the object calculated to awaken feeling, or there will be no feeling. You may as well shut up your eyes and attempt to see, or go into a dark room. In a dark room there is no object to awaken the sense of sight, and you may *exert* yourself, and strain your eyes, and try to see, but you will see nothing. When the mind's attention is taken up with looking inward, and attempting to examine the nature of the present emotion, that emotion at once ceases to exist, because the attention is no longer fixed on the object that causes the emotion. I hold my hand before this lamp, it casts a shadow ; but if I take the lamp away, there is no shadow ; there must be light to produce a shadow. It is just so certain that if the mind is turned away from the object that awakens emotion, the emotion ceases to exist. The mind must be fixed on the object, not on the emotion, or there will be no emotion, and consequently no evidence.

You will never get evidence by spending time in mourning over the state of your heart.

Some people spend their time in nothing but complaining, "O, I don't feel, I can't feel, my heart is so hard." What are they doing ? Nothing but mourning and crying because they don't feel. Perhaps they are trying to work themselves up into feeling ! Just as philosophical as trying to fly. While they are mourning all the while, and thinking about their hard hearts, and doing nothing, they are the ridicule of the devil. Suppose a man should shut himself out from the fire and then go about complaining how cold he is, the very children would laugh at him. He must expect to freeze, if he will shut himself out from the means of warmth. And all his mourning and feeling bad will not help the matter.

*Second.* Positively. What must be done in this duty ?

If you wish to test the true state of your heart with regard to

any object, you must fix your attention on that object. If you wish to test the power or accuracy of sight, you must apply the faculty to the object, and then you will test the power and state of that faculty. You place yourself in the midst of objects, to test the state of your eyes, or in the midst of sounds, if you wish to test the perfectness of your ears. And the more you shut out other objects that excite the other senses, and the more strongly you fasten your minds on this one, the more perfectly you test the keenness of your vision, or the perfectness of your hearing. A multiplicity of objects is liable to distract the mind. When we attend to any object calculated to awaken feeling, it is impossible not to feel. The mind is so constituted that it cannot but feel. It is not necessary to stop and ask, "Do I feel?" Suppose you put your hand near the fire, do you need to stop and ask the question, "Do I really feel the sensation of warmth?" You know, of course, that you do feel. If you pass your hand rapidly by the lamp, the sensation may be so slight as not to be noticed, but is none the less real, and if you paid attention strictly enough, you would know it. Where the impression is slight, it requires an effort of attention to notice your own consciousness. So the passing feeling of the mind may be so slight as not to occupy your thoughts, and thus may escape your notice, but it is not the less real. But hold your hand in the lamp a minute, and the feeling will force itself upon your notice, whatever be your other occupations. If the mind is fixed on an object calculated to excite emotions of any kind, it is impossible not to feel those emotions in a degree; and if the mind is *intently* fixed, it is impossible not to feel the emotions in such a degree as to be conscious that they exist. These principles will show you how we are to come at the proof of our characters, and know the real state of our feelings, towards any object. It is by fixing our attention on the object till our emotions are so excited that we become conscious what they are.

I will specify another thing that ought to be borne in mind. *Be sure the things on which your mind is fixed, and on which you wish to test the state of your heart are realities.*

There is a great deal of imaginary religion in the world, which the people who are the subjects of it mistake for real. They have high feelings, their minds are much excited, and the feeling corresponds with the object contemplated. But here is the

source of the delusion—*the object is imaginary*. It is not that the feeling is false or imaginary. It is real feeling. It is not that the feeling does not correspond with the object before the mind. It corresponds perfectly. But the object is a fiction. The individual has formed a notion of God, or of Jesus Christ, or of salvation, that is altogether aside from the truth, and his feelings in view of these imaginations are such as they would be towards the true objects, if he had true religion, and so he is deluded. Here is undoubtedly a great source of the false hopes and professions in the world.

V. I will now specify a few things on which it is your duty to try the state of your minds.

*Sin*—not your own particular sins, but sin itself, as an outrage committed against God.

You need not suppose you will get at the true state of your hearts, merely by finding in your mind a strong feeling of disapprobation of sin. This belongs to the nature of an intelligent being, as such. All intelligent beings feel a disapprobation of sin, when viewed abstractly, and without reference to their own selfish gratification. The devil, no doubt, feels it. The devil no more feels approbation for sin, when viewed abstractly, than Gabriel. He blames sinners, and condemns their conduct, and whenever he has no selfish reason for being pleased at what they do, he abhors it. You will often find in the wicked on earth a strong abhorrence of sin. There is not a wicked man on earth, that would not condemn and abhor sin, in the abstract. The mind is so constituted, that sin is universally and naturally and necessarily abhorrent to right reason and to conscience. Every power of the mind revolts at sin. Man has pleasure in them that commit iniquity, only when he has some selfish reason for wishing them to commit it. No rational being approves of sin, as sin.

But there is a striking difference between the constitutional disapprobation of sin, as an abstract thing, and that hearty detestation and opposition that is founded on love to God. To illustrate this idea. It is one thing for that youth to feel that a certain act is wrong, and quite another thing to view it as an injury to his father. Here is something in addition to his former feeling. He has not only indignation against the act as wrong, but his love to his father produces a feeling of *grief* that is peculiar. So the individual who loves God feels not only a

strong disapprobation of sin, as wrong, but a feeling of grief mingled with indignation when he views it as committed against God.

If, then, you want to know how you feel towards sin, how do you feel when you move round among sinners, and see them break God's law? When you hear them swear profanely, or see them break the Sabbath, or get drunk, how do you feel? Do you feel as the Psalmist did when he wrote, "I beheld the transgressors, and was *grieved*, because they kept not thy word?" So he says, "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law." And again, "*Horror* hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law."

You ought to test the state of your hearts towards your own sins.

Look back on your past sins, call up your conduct in former times, and see whether you do cordially condemn it and loathe it, and feel as an affectionate child would feel, when he remembers how he has disobeyed or dishonoured a beloved parent. It is one thing to feel a strong conviction that your former conduct was wicked. It is quite another thing to have this feeling attended with strong emotions of *grief*, because it was sin against God. Probably there are few Christians who have not looked back upon their former conduct towards their parents with deep emotion, and thought how a beloved father and an affectionate mother have been disobeyed and wronged; and who have not felt, in addition to a strong disapprobation of their conduct, a deep emotion of *grief*, that inclined to vent itself in weeping, and perhaps did gush forth in irrepressible tears. Now this is true repentance towards a parent. And repentance towards God is the same thing, and if genuine, it will correspond in degree to the intensity of attention with which the mind is fixed on the subject.

You want to test your feelings towards impenitent sinners.

Then go among them, and converse with them, on the subject of their souls, warn them, see what they say, and how they feel, and get at the real state of their hearts, and then you will know how you feel towards the impenitent. Do not shut yourself up in your closet and try to imagine an impenitent sinner. You may bring up a picture of the imagination that will affect your sympathies, and make you weep and pray. But go and bring your heart in contact with the living reality of a sinner,

reason with him, exhort him, find out his cavils, his obstinacy, his insincerity, pray with him if you can. You cannot do this without waking up emotions in your mind, and if you are a Christian, it will wake up such mingled emotions of grief, compassion and indignation, as Jesus Christ feels, and as will leave you no room to doubt what is the state of your heart on this subject. Bring your mind in contact with sinners, and fix it there, and rely on it you will feel.

You want to prove the state of your mind towards God.

Fix your thoughts intently on God. And do not set yourselves down to imagine a God after your own foolish hearts, but take the Bible and learn there what is the true idea of God. Do not fancy a shape or appearance, or imagine how he looks, but fix your mind on the Bible description of how he feels and what he does, and what he says, and you cannot but feel. Here you will detect the real state of your heart. Nay, this *will constitute the real state of your heart*, which you cannot mistake.

Test your feelings towards Christ.

You are bound to know whether you love the Lord Jesus Christ or not. Run over the circumstances of his life, and see whether they appear as realities to your mind, his miracles, his sufferings, his lovely character, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, his intercession now at the right hand of the throne of God. Do you believe all these? Are they realities to your mind? What are your feelings in view of them? When you think of his willingness to save, his ability to save, his atoning death, his power; if these things are realities to you, you will have feelings, of which you will be conscious, and concerning which there will be no mistake.

What are your feelings towards the saints?

If you wish to test your heart on this point, whether you love the saints, do not let your thoughts run to the ends of the earth, but fix your mind on the saints by you, and see whether you love them, whether you desire their sanctification, whether you really long to have them grow in grace, whether you can bear them in your heart to the throne of grace in faith, and ask God to bestow blessings on them.

So in regard to revivals.

You wish to know what is the state of your feelings toward revivals, then read about them, think of them, fix your mind on them, and you cannot but have feelings that will evince the state

of your heart. The same is true of the heathen, of the slaves, of drunkards, of the Bible, of any object of pious regard. The only way to know the state of your heart is to fix your mind on the reality of those things, till you feel so intensely that there is no mistaking the nature of your feelings.

Should you find a difficulty in attending to any of these objects sufficiently to produce feeling, it is owing to one of two reasons, either your mind is taken up with some other parts of religion, so as not to allow of such fixed attention to the specified object, or your thoughts wander with the fool's eyes, to the ends of the earth. The former is sometimes the case, and I have known some Christians to be very much distressed because they did not feel so intensely as they think they ought on some subjects. Their own sins, for instance. A person's mind may be so much taken up with anxiety and labour and prayer for sinners, that it requires an effort to think enough about his own soul to feel deeply, and when he goes on his knees to pray about his own sins, that sinner with whom he has been talking comes right up before his mind, and he can hardly pray for himself. It is not to be regarded as evidence against you, if the reason why you do not feel on one subject in religion is because your feelings are so engrossed about another, of equal importance. But if your thoughts run all over the world, and that is the reason you do not feel deeply enough to know what is your true character, if your mind will not come down to the Bible, and fix on *any* object of religious feeling, lay a strong hand on yourself, and fix your thoughts with a death-grasp, till you do feel. You can command your thoughts : God has put the control of your mind in your own hands. And in this way, you can control your own feelings, by turning your attention upon the object you wish to feel about. Bring yourself, then, powerfully and resolutely, to that point, and give it not over till you fasten your mind to the subject, and till the deep fountains of feeling break up in your mind, and you know what is the state of your heart, and understand your real character in the sight of God.

#### REMARKS.

Activity in religion is indispensable to self-examination.

An individual can never know what is the true state of his heart, unless he is active in the duties of religion. Shut up in his closet, he never can tell how he feels towards objects that



are without, and he never can feel right towards them until he goes out and acts. How can he know his real feeling towards sinners, if he never brings his mind in contact with sinners? He goes into his closet, and his imagination may make him feel, but it is a deceitful feeling, because not produced by a reality. If you wish to test the reality of your feelings towards sinners, go out and warn sinners, and then the reality of your feelings will manifest itself.

Unless persons try their hearts by the reality of things, they are constantly subject to delusion, and are all the time managing to delude themselves.

Suppose an individual shut up in a cloister, shut out from the world of reality, and living in a world of imagination. He becomes a perfect creature of imagination. So it is in religion, with those who do not bring their mind in contact with realities. Such persons think they love mankind, and yet do them no good. They imagine they abhor sin, and yet do nothing to destroy it. How many persons deceive themselves, by an excitement of the imagination about *missions*, for instance; how common it is for persons to get up a great deal of feeling, and hold prayer meetings for missions, who really do nothing to save souls. Women will spend a whole day at a prayer meeting to pray for the conversion of the world, while their impenitent servant in the kitchen is not spoken to all day, and perhaps not in a month to save her soul. People will get up a public meeting, and talk about feeling for the heathen, when they are making no direct efforts for sinners around them. This is all a fiction of the imagination. There is no reality in such a religion as that. If they had real love of God, and love of souls, and real piety, the pictures drawn by the imagination about the distant heathen would not create so much more feeling than the reality around them.

It will not do to say, it is because their attention is not turned towards sinners around them. They hear the profane oaths, and see the Sabbath breaking and other vices, as a naked reality before their eyes, every day. And if these produce no feeling, it is in vain to pretend that they feel as God requires for sinners in heathen lands, or any where. Nay, take this very individual, now so full of feeling for the heathen, as he imagines, and place him *among the heathen*, transport him to the Friendly Islands, or elsewhere, away from the fictions of imagination, and in the

midst of the cold and naked reality of heathenism, and all his deep feeling is gone. He may write letters home about the abominations of the heathen, and all that, but his feeling about their salvation is gone. You hear people talk so about the heathen, who have never converted a soul at home, rely upon it that is all imagination. If they do not promote revivals at home, where they understand the language, and where they have direct access to their neighbours, much less can they be depended on to promote the real work of religion on heathen ground. The churches ought to understand this, and keep it in mind in selecting men to go on foreign missions. They ought to know that if the naked reality at home does not excite a person to action, the devil would only laugh at a million such missionaries.

The same delusion often manifests itself in regard to *revivals*. There is an individual who is a great friend to revivals. But mark; they are always the revivals of former days, or of revivals in the abstract, or distant revivals, or revivals that are yet to come. But as to any present revival, he is always aloof and doubtful. He can read about the revivals in President Edward's day, or in Scotland, or Wales, and be greatly excited and delighted. He can pray, "O Lord, revive Thy work; O Lord, let us have such revivals, let us have a pentecost season, when thousands shall be converted in a day." But get him into the reality of things, and he never happens to see a revival in which he can take any interest, or feel real complacency. He is friendly to the fictitious imaginings of his own mind, he can create a state of things that will excite his feelings, but no naked reality ever brings him out to co-operate in actually promoting a revival.

In the days of our Saviour, the people said, and no doubt really believed, that they abhorred the doings of those who persecuted the prophets. They said, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them of the blood of the prophets." No doubt they wondered that people could be so wicked as to do such things. But they had never seen a prophet, they were moved simply by their imagination. And as soon as the Lord Jesus Christ appeared, the greatest of prophets, on whom all the prophecies centred, they rejected him, and finally put him to death with as much cold-hearted cruelty as ever their fathers had killed a prophet. "Fill ye up,"

says our Saviour, "the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth."

Mankind have always, in every age of the world, fallen in love with fictions of their own imagination, over which they have stumbled into hell. Look at the Universalist. He imagines a God that will save everybody, at any rate, and a heaven that will accommodate everybody; and then he loves the God he has made and the heaven he has imagined, and perhaps will even weep with love. His feelings are often deep, but they are all delusive, because excited by fiction and not by truth.

The more an individual goes out from himself, and makes things not belonging to himself the subject of thought, the more piety he will have, and the more evidence of his piety.

Religion consists in love, in feeling right and doing right, or doing good. If therefore you wish to have great piety, don't think of having it by cultivating it in a way which never caused piety to grow; that is, by retiring into a cloister and withdrawing from contact with mankind.—If the Lord Jesus Christ had supposed such circumstances to be favourable to piety, he would have directed them so. But he knew better. He has therefore appointed circumstances as they are, so that his people may have a thousand objects of benevolence, a thousand opportunities to do good. And if they go out of themselves and turn their hearts upon these things, they cannot fail to grow in piety, and to have their evidences increasing and satisfactory.

It is only in one department of self-examination that we can consistently shut ourselves up in the closet to perform the duty. That is when we want to look back and calmly examine the motives of our past conduct. In such cases it is often necessary to abstract our thoughts and keep out other things from our minds, to turn our minds back and look at things we have done and the motives by which we were actuated. To do this effectually it is often necessary to resort to retirement, and fasting, and prayer. Sometimes it is impossible to wake up a lively recollection of what we wish to examine, without calling in the laws of association to our aid. We attempt to call up past scenes, and all seems to be confusion and darkness, until we strike upon some associated idea, that gradually brings the whole fresh before us. Suppose I am to be called as a witness in court concerning a transaction, I can sometimes regain a lively recollection of what took place, only by going to the place,

and then all the circumstances come up, as if but of yesterday. So we may find in regard to the re-examination of some part of our past history, that no shutting ourselves up will bring it back, no protracted meditation, or fasting, or prayer, till we throw ourselves into some circumstances that will wake up the associated ideas, and thus bring back the feelings we formerly had.

Suppose a minister wishes to look back and see how he felt, and the spirit with which he had preached years ago. He wishes to know how much real piety there was in his labours. He might get at a great deal in his closet on his knees, by the aid of the strong influences of the Spirit of God. But he will come at it much more effectually by going to the place, and preaching again there. The exact attitude in which his mind was before, may thus recur to him and stand in strong reality before his mind.

In examining yourselves, be careful to avoid expecting to find all the graces of the Christian in exercise in your mind at once.

This is contrary to the nature of mind. You ought to satisfy yourselves, if you find the exercises of your mind are right, *on the subject that is before* your mind. If you have *wrong* feelings at the time, that is another thing. But if you find that the emotions at the time are right, do not draw a wrong inference, because some other right emotion is not in present exercise. The mind is so constituted, that it can only have one train of emotions at a time.

From this subject you see why people often do not feel more than they do.

They are taking a course not calculated to produce feeling. They feel, but not on the right subjects. Mankind always feel on some subjects, and the reason why they do not feel deeply on religious subjects is, because their attention is not deeply fixed on these subjects.

You see the reason why there is such a strange diversity in the exercises of real Christians.

There are some Christians whose feelings, when they have any feeling, are always of the happy kind. There are others whose feelings are always of a sad and distressing kind. They are in almost constant agony for sinners. The reason is, that their thoughts are directed to different objects. One class are always thinking of the class of objects calculated to make them

happy ; the other are thinking of the state of the church, or the state of sinners, and weighed down as with a burden, as if they had a mountain on their shoulders. Both may be religious, both classes of feelings are right, in view of the objects at which they look. The apostle Paul had continual heaviness and sorrow of heart on account of his brethren. No doubt he felt right. The case of his brethren, who had rejected the Saviour, was so much the object of his thoughts, the dreadful wrath that they had brought upon themselves, the doom that hung over them, was constantly before his mind, and how could he be otherwise than sad ?

Observe the influence of these two classes of feelings in the usefulness of individuals.

Show me a very joyful and happy Christian, and he is not generally a *very* useful Christian. Generally, such are so taken up with enjoying the sweets of religion, that they *do* but little. You find a class of ministers, who preach a great deal on these subjects, and make their pious hearers very happy in religion, but such ministers are seldom instrumental in converting many sinners, however much they may have refreshed and edified and gratified saints. On the other hand you will find men who are habitually filled with deep agony of soul in view of the state of sinners, and these men will be largely instrumental in converting men. The reason is plain. Both preached the truth, both preached the gospel, in different proportions, and the feelings awakened corresponded with the views they preached. The difference is, that one comforted the saints, the other converted sinners.

You may see a class of professors of religion who are always happy, and they are lovely companions, but they are very seldom engaged in pulling sinners out of the fire. You find others always full of agony for sinners, looking at their state, and longing to have souls converted. Instead of enjoying the antepast of heaven on earth, they are sympathising with the Son of God, when he was on earth, groaning in his spirit, and spending all night in prayer.

The real *revival* spirit is a spirit of agonizing desires and prayer for sinners.

You see how you may account for your own feelings at different times.

People often wonder why they feel as they do. The answer

is plain. You feel so, because you think so. You direct your attention to those objects which are calculated to produce those feelings.

You see why some people's feelings are so changeable.

There are many whose feelings are always variable and unsteady. That is because their thoughts are unsteady. If they would fix their thoughts, they would regulate their feelings.

You see the way to beget any desired state of feeling in your own mind, and how to beget any desired state of feeling in others.

Place the thoughts on the subject that is calculated to produce those feelings, and confine them there, and the feelings will not fail to follow.

There are multitudes of pious persons who dishonour religion by their doubts.

They are perpetually talking about their doubts, and they take up a hasty conviction that they have no religion. Whereas, if instead of dwelling on their doubts they will fix their minds on other objects, on Christ for instance, or go out and seek sinners, and try to bring them to repentance, rely upon it, they will feel, and feel right, and feel so as to dissipate their doubts.

Remember, you are not to wait till you feel right before you do this. Perhaps some things that I said to this church have not been rightly understood. I said you could do nothing for God unless you felt right. Do not therefore infer that you are to sit still and do nothing till you are satisfied that you do feel right. But place yourself in circumstances to make you feel right and go to work. On one hand, to bustle about without any feeling is no way, and on the other hand, to shut yourself up in your closet and wait for feeling to come, is no way. Be sure to be always active. You never will feel right otherwise. And then keep your mind constantly under the influence of those objects that are calculated to create and keep alive Christian feelings.

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## TRUE SUBMISSION.

“Submit yourselves therefore to God.”—JAMES iv, 7.

**B**EFORE I enter on the discussion of this subject, I wish to make two remarks, introductory to the main question.

The first remark is this : If any of you are deceived in regard to your hopes, and have built on a false foundation, the fundamental error in your case was your embracing what you thought was the gospel plan of salvation from selfish motives. Your selfish hearts were unbroken. This is the source of your delusion, if you are deceived. If your selfishness was subdued, you are not deceived in your hope. If it was not, all your religion is vain, and your hope is vain.

The other remark I wish to make is, that if any of you are deceived, and have a false hope, you are in the utmost danger of reviving your old hope, whenever you are awakened to consider your condition. It is a very common thing for such professors, after a season of anxiety and self-examination, to settle down again on the old foundation. The reason is, their habits of mind have become fixed in that channel, and therefore, by the laws of mind it is difficult to break into a new course. It is indispensable, therefore, if you ever mean to get right, that you should see clearly that you have hitherto been wholly wrong, so that you need not multiply any more the kind of efforts that have deceived you heretofore.

Who does not know that there is a great deal of this kind of deception ? How often will a great part of the church lie cold and dead, till a revival commences ? Then you will see them bustling about, and they get engaged, as they call it, in religion, and renew their efforts and multiply their prayers for a season ; and this is what they call getting revived. But it is only the same kind of religion that they had before. Such religion lasts no longer than the public excitement. As soon as the body of the church begin to diminish their efforts for the conversion of

sinners, these individuals relapse into their former worldliness, and get as near to what they were before their supposed conversion, as their pride and their fear of the censures of the church will let them. When a revival comes again, they renew the same round ; and so they live along by spasms, over and over again, revived and backslidden, revived and backslidden, alternately, as long as they live. The truth is, they were deluded at first, by a spurious conversion, in which selfishness never was broken down ; and the more they multiply such kind of efforts, the more sure they are to be lost.

I will now enter upon the direct discussion of the subject, and endeavour to show you what is not true submission.

Show what true submission is.

I. I am to show what true submission *is not*.

True submission to God is not indifference. No two things can be more unlike than indifference and true submission.

It does not consist in being willing to be sinful for the glory of God. Some have supposed that true submission included the idea of being willing to be sinful for the glory of God. But this is a mistake. To be willing to be sinful is itself a sinful state of mind. And to be willing to do anything for the glory of God is to choose not to be sinful. The idea of being sinful for the glory of God is absurd.

It does not consist in a willingness to be punished.

If we were now in hell, true submission would require that we should be willing to be punished. Because then it would be certain that it was God's will we should be punished. So, if we were in a world where no provision was made for the redemption of sinners, and where our punishment was therefore inevitable, it would be our duty to be willing to be punished. If a man has committed murder, and there is no other way to secure the public interest but for him to be hung, it is his duty to be willing to be hung for the public good. But if there was any other way in which the murderer could make the public interest whole, it would not be his duty to be willing to be hung. So if we were in a world solely under law, where there was no plan of salvation, and no measure to secure the stability of government in the forgiveness of sinners, it would be the duty of every man to be willing to be punished. But as it is in this world, genuine submission does not imply a willingness to be punished. Because we know it is not the will of God that all shall be punished, but



on the other hand, we know it is his will that all who truly repent and submit to God shall be saved.

II. I am to show what genuine submission *is*.

It consists in perfect acquiescence in all the providential dealings and dispensations of God; whether relating to ourselves, or to others, or to the universe. Some persons suppose they do acquiesce in the abstract, in the providential government of God. But yet, if you converse with them you see they will find fault with God's arrangements in many things. They wonder why God suffered Adam to sin? Or why he suffered sin to enter the universe at all? Or why he did this or that? Or why he made this or that thus or so? In all these cases, supposing we could assign no reason at all that would be satisfactory, true submission implies a perfect acquiescence in whatever he has suffered or done; and feeling that, so far as his providence is concerned, it is all right.

True submission implies acquiescence in the precept of God's moral law. The general precept of God's moral law is, "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, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Perhaps some will say, "I do acquiesce in this precept; I feel that it is right, and I have no objection to this law." Here I want you to make the distinction carefully between a constitutional approbation of God's law, and actual submission to it. There is no mind but what naturally, and by its own common sense of what is right, approves of this law. There is not a devil in hell that does not approve it. God has so constituted mind, that it is impossible to be a moral agent, and not approve his law. But this is not the acquiescence I am speaking of. A person may feel this approbation to so great a degree as to be even delighted without having true submission to it. There are two ideas included in genuine submission, to which I wish your particular attention.

The first idea is, that true acquiescence in God's moral law includes actual obedience. It is vain for a child to pretend a real acquiescence in his father's commands, unless he actually obeys them. It is in vain for a citizen to pretend an acquiescence in the laws of the land, unless he obeys the laws.

The main idea of submission is the yielding up of that which constitutes the great point in controversy. And that is this; that men have taken off their supreme affection from God and

his kingdom, and set up self-interest as the paramount object of regard. Instead of laying themselves out in doing good, as God requires, they have adopted the maxim that "Charity begins at home." This is the very point in debate, between God and the sinner. The sinner aims at promoting his own interest, as his supreme object. Now, the first idea implied in submission is the yielding up of this point. We must cease placing our own interest as supreme, and let the interests of God and his kingdom rise in our affections just as much above our own interests as their real value is greater. The man who does not do this is a rebel against God.

Suppose a civil ruler were to set himself to promote the general happiness of his nation, and should enact laws wisely adapted to this end, and should embark all his own resources in this object, and that he should then require every subject to do the same. Then suppose an individual should go and set up his own private interest in opposition to the general interest. He is a rebel against the government, and against all the interest which the government is set to promote. Then the first idea of submission, on the part of the rebel, is *giving up that point*, and falling in with the ruler and the obedient subjects in promoting the public good. Now, the law of God absolutely requires that you should make your own happiness subordinate to the glory of God and the good of the universe. And until you do this, you are the enemy of God and the universe, and a child of hell.

And the gospel requires the same as the law. It is astonishing that many, within a few years, have maintained that it is right for a man to aim directly at his own salvation, and make his own happiness the great object of pursuit. But it is plain that God's law is different from this, and requires every one to prize God's interest supremely. And the gospel requires the same with the law. Otherwise, Jesus Christ is the minister of sin, and came into the world to take up arms against God's government.

It is easy to show, from the Bible, that the gospel requires disinterested benevolence, or love to God and love to man, the same as the law. The first passage I shall quote is this, "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." What does that mean? Strange as it may seem, a writer has lately quoted this very text to prove that it is right to seek first our own

salvation or our own happiness and to make that the leading object of pursuit. But that is not the meaning. It requires every one to make the promotion of the kingdom of God his great object. I suppose it to enjoin the duty of aiming at being *holy*, and not at our *own happiness*. Happiness is connected with holiness, but it is not the *same thing*, and such holiness or obedience to God, and to honour and glorify him, is a very different thing from seeking supremely our own interests.

Another passage is, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Indeed! What? may we not eat and drink to please ourselves? No. We may not even gratify our natural appetite for food, but as subordinate to the glory of God. This is what the gospel requires, for the apostle wrote this to the Christian church.

Another passage is, "Look not on your own things, but every man on the things of another." But it is vain to attempt to quote all the passages that teach this. You may find, on almost every page of the Bible, some passage that means the same thing, requiring us not to seek our own good, but the benefit of others.

Our Saviour says, "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life shall save it." That is, If a man aims at his own interest, he shall lose his own interest; if he aims at saving his own soul, as his supreme object, he will lose his own soul; he must go out of himself, and make the good of others his supreme object, or he will be lost.

And again he says, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life." Here some people may stumble, and say, There is a reward held out as a motive. But, mark! What are you to do? Forsake self for the sake of a reward to self? No; but to forsake self for the sake of Christ and his gospel; and the *consequence* will be as stated. Here is the important distinction.

In the 13th chapter of Corinthians Paul gives a full description of this disinterested love, or charity, without which a person is nothing in religion. It is remarkable how much he says

a person may do, and yet be nothing. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." But true gospel benevolence is of this character. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." She seeketh not her own. Mark that; it has no selfish end, but seeks the happiness of others as its great end. Without this kind of benevolence, we know there is not a particle of religion. You see, I might stand here all night quoting and explaining passages to the same point; showing that all pure religion consists in disinterested benevolence.

Before I go farther, I wish to mention several objections to this view, which may arise in your minds. I do this more particularly, because some of you may stumble right here, and after all get the idea that it is *right* to have our religion consist in aiming at our own salvation as our great object.

OBJECTION 1. "Why are the threatenings of the word of God given, if it is selfishness to be influenced by a fear of the wrath to come?"

Man is so constituted that by the laws of his being he dreads pain. The scripture threatenings therefore answer many purposes. One is, to arrest the attention of the selfish mind, and lead it to examine the reasons there are for loving and obeying God. When the Holy Spirit thus gets the attention, then he rouses the sinner's conscience, and engages that to consider and decide on the reasonableness and duty of submitting to God.

Other answers may be given to this objection.

OBJECTION 2. "Since God has given us these susceptibilities to pleasure and pain, is it wrong to be influenced by them?"

It is neither right nor wrong. These susceptibilities have no

moral character. If I had time to-night, I might make all plain to you. In morals, there is a class of actions that come under the denomination of prudential considerations. For instance: Suppose you stand on a precipice, where, if you throw yourself down, you will infallibly break your neck. You are warned against it. Now, if you do not regard the warning, but throw yourself down, and destroy your life, that will be sin. But regarding it is no virtue. It is simply a prudential act. There is no virtue in avoiding danger, although it may often be sinful not to avoid it. It is sinful for men to brave the wrath of God. But to be afraid of hell is not holy, no more than the fear of breaking your neck down a precipice is holy. It is simply a dictate of the constitution.

OBJECTION 3. "Does not the Bible make it our immediate duty to seek our own happiness?"

It is not sinful to seek our own happiness, according to its real value. On the contrary, it is a real duty to do so. And he that neglects to do this, commits sin. Another answer is, that although it is right to seek our own happiness, and the constitutional laws of the mind require us to regard our own happiness, still our constitution does not indicate that to pursue our own happiness as the chief good, is right. Suppose any one should argue, that because our constitution requires food, therefore it is right to seek food as the supreme good—would that be sound? Certainly not; for the Bible expressly forbids any such thing, and says—"Whether ye eat or drink, do all to the glory of God."

OBJECTION 4. "Each one's happiness is put particularly in his own power; and if every one should seek his own happiness, the happiness of the whole will be secured, to the greatest amount that is possible."

This objection is specious, but not sound. I deny the conclusion altogether.

The laws of the mind are such, that it is impossible for any one to be happy while he makes his own happiness the supreme object. Happiness consists in the gratification of virtuous desires. But to be gratified, the thing must be obtained *that is desired*. To be happy, therefore, the desires that are gratified must be right, and therefore they must be disinterested desires. If your desires terminate on yourself; for instance—if you desire the conversion of sinners for the sake of promoting your own

happiness, when sinners are converted it does not make you happy, because it is not the thing on which your desire terminated. The law of the mind, therefore, renders it impossible, if each individual pursues his own happiness, that he should ever obtain it. To be more definite. Two things are indispensable to true happiness. First, there must be virtuous desire. If the desire be not virtuous, conscience will remonstrate against it, and therefore a gratification would be attended with pain. Secondly, this desire must be gratified in the attainment of its object. The object must be desired for its own sake, or the gratification would not be complete, even should the object be attained. If the object is desired as a means to an end, the gratification would depend on obtaining the end by this means. But if the thing was desired as an end, or for its own sake, obtaining it would produce unmingled gratification. The mind must, therefore, desire not its own happiness, for in this way it can never be attained, but the desire must terminate on some other object which is desired for its own sake, the attainment of which would be a gratification and thus result in happiness.

If each one pursues his own happiness, as his supreme end, the interests of different individuals will clash, and destroy the happiness of all. This is the very thing we see in the world. This is the reason of all the fraud, and violence, and oppression, and wickedness in earth and hell. It is because each one is pursuing his own interest, and their interests clash. The true way to secure our own happiness is, not to pursue that as an end, but to pursue another object, which, when obtained, will afford complete gratification—the glory of God and the good of the universe. The question is not, whether it is right to desire and pursue our own happiness at all, but whether it is right to make our own happiness our supreme end.

OBJECTION 5.—“Happiness consists in gratifying virtuous desire. Then the thing I am at, is gratifying virtuous desire. Is not that aiming at my own happiness?”

The mind does not aim at gratifying the desire, but at accomplishing the thing desired. Suppose you see a beggar, as mentioned last week, and you give him a loaf of bread. You aim at relieving the beggar. That is the object desired, and when that is done, your desire is gratified, and you are happy. But if, in relieving the beggar, the object you aimed at was your own hap-

piness, then relieving the beggar will not gratify the desire, and you render it impossible to gratify it.

Thus you see that both the law and the gospel require disinterested benevolence, as the only condition on which man can be happy.

True submission implies acquiescence in the penalty of God's law.

I again advert to the distinction which I have made before. We are not, in this world, simply under a government of naked law. This world is a province of Jehovah's empire, that stands in a peculiar relation to God's government. It has rebelled, and a new and special provision has been made, by which God offers us mercy. The conditions are, that we obey the precepts of the law, and submit to the justice of the penalty. It is a government of law, with the gospel appended to it. The gospel requires the same obedience with the law. It maintains the ill desert of sin, and requires the sinner's acquiescence in the justice of the penalty. If the sinner were under mere law, it would require that he should submit to the infliction of the penalty. But man is not, and never has been, since the fall, under the government of mere law, but has always known, more or less clearly, that mercy is offered. It has, therefore, never been required, that men should be willing to be punished. In this respect it is, that gospel submission differs from legal submission. Under naked law, submission would consist in willingness to be punished. In this world submission consists in acquiescence in the justice of the penalty, and regarding himself as *deserving* the eternal wrath of God.

True submission implies acquiescence in the sovereignty of God.

It is the duty of every sovereign to see that all his subjects submit to his government. And it is his duty to enact such laws, that every individual, if he obeys perfectly, will promote the public good, in the highest possible degree. And then, if any one refuses to obey, it is his duty to take that individual by force, and make him subserve the public interest in the best way that is possible with a rebellious subject. If he will not subserve the public good voluntarily, he should be made to do it involuntarily. The government must either hang him, or shut him up, or in some way make him an example of suffering; or, if the public good admits of mercy, it may show mercy in such a way

as will best subserve the general interest. Now God is a sovereign ruler, and the submission which he requires is just what he is bound to require. He would be neglecting his duty as a ruler, if he did not require it. And since you have refused to obey this requirement, you are now bound to throw yourself into his hands, for him to dispose of you, for time and eternity, in the way that will most promote the interests of the universe. You have forfeited all claim to any portion in the happiness of the universe or the favour of God. And the thing which is now required of you is, that since you cannot render obedience for the past, you should acknowledge the justice of his law, and leave your future destiny entirely and unconditionally at his disposal, for time and for eternity. You must submit all you have and all you are to him. You have justly forfeited all, and are bound to give up all at his bidding, in any way that he calls for them, to promote the interests of his kingdom.

Finally, it requires submission to the terms of the gospel. The terms of the gospel are—

Repentance, hearty sorrow for sin, justifying God and taking his part against yourself.

Faith, perfect trust and confidence towards God, such as leads you without hesitation to throw yourself, body and soul, and all you have and are, into his hand, to do with you as he thinks good.

Holiness, or disinterested benevolence.

To receive salvation as a mere matter of pure grace, to which you have no claim on the score of justice.

To receive Christ as your mediator and advocate, your atoning sacrifice, your ruler and teacher, and in all the offices in which he is presented to you in God's word. In short, you are to be wholly acquiescent in God's appointed way of salvation.

#### REMARKS.

I.—You see why there are so many false hopes in the church.

The reason is, that so many persons embrace what they consider the gospel, without yielding obedience to the law. They look at the law with dread, and regard the gospel as a scheme to get away from the law. These tendencies have always been manifested among men. There is a certain class that hold to



the gospel and reject the law; and another class that take the law and neglect the gospel. The Antinomians think to get rid of the law altogether. They suppose the gospel rule of life is different from the law; whereas, the truth is, that the rule of life is the same in both, and both require disinterested benevolence. Now, if a person thinks that, under the gospel, he may give up the glory of God as his supreme object, and instead of loving God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, may make his own salvation his supreme object, his hopes are false. He has embraced another gospel—which is no gospel at all.

II.—The subject shows how we are to meet the common objection, that faith in Christ implies making our own salvation our object or motive.

What is faith? It is not believing that *you* shall be saved, but believing God's word concerning his Son. It is no where revealed that you shall be saved. He has revealed the fact that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. What you call faith, is more properly hope. The confident expectation that you shall be saved is an *inference* from the act of faith; and an inference which you have a right to draw when you are conscious of obeying the law and believing the gospel. That is, when you exercise the feelings required in the law and gospel, you have a right to trust in Christ for your *own* salvation.

III.—It is an error to suppose that despair of mercy is essential to true submission.

This is plain from the fact that, under the gospel, everybody knows it is the will of God that every soul shall be saved that will exercise disinterested benevolence. Suppose a man should come to me and ask, "What shall I do to be saved?" and I should tell him, "If you expect to be saved you must despair of being saved," what would he think? What inspired writer ever gave such direction as this? No, the inspired answer is, "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," "Repent," "Believe the gospel," and so on. Is there any thing here that implies despair?

It is true that sinners sometimes do despair, before they obtain true peace. But what is the reason? It is not because despair is essential to true peace, but because of their ignorance, or of wrong instructions given to them, or misapprehension of the truth. Many anxious sinners despair because they get a

false impression that they have sinned away their day of grace, or that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or that their sins are peculiarly aggravated, and the gospel provision does not reach them. Sometimes they despair for this reason—they know that there is mercy provided, and ready to be bestowed as soon as they will comply with the terms, but they find all their efforts at true submission vain. They find they are so proud and obstinate, that they cannot get their own consent to the terms of salvation. Perhaps most individuals who do submit, do in fact come to a point where they give up all as lost. But is that necessary? That is the question. Now, you see, it is nothing but their own wickedness drives them to despair. They are so unwilling to take hold of the mercy that is offered. Their despair, then, instead of being essential to true submission under the gospel, is inconsistent with it, and no man ever did embrace the gospel while in that state. It is horrid unbelief, then, it is sin to despair; and to say it is essential to true submission, is saying that sin is essential to true submission.

IV.—True submission is acquiescing in the whole government of God.

It is acquiescing in his providential government, in his moral government, in the precept of his law, and in the penalty of his law, so that he is himself deserving of exceeding great and eternal weight of damnation; and submission to the terms of salvation in the gospel. Under the gospel, it is no man's duty to be willing to be damned. It is wholly inconsistent with his duty to be willing to be damned. The man who submits to the naked law, and consents to be damned, is as much in rebellion as ever; for it is one of God's express requirements that he should obey the gospel.

V.—To call on a sinner to be willing to be punished is a grand mistake, for several reasons.

It is to set aside the gospel, and place him under another government than that which exists. It sets before him a partial view of the character of God, to which he is required to submit. It keeps back the true motives to submission. It presents not the real and true God, but a different being. It is practising a deception on him, by holding out the idea that God desires his damnation, and he must submit to it; for God has taken his solemn oath that he desires not the death of the

wicked, but that he turn from his wickedness and live. It is a slander upon God, and charging God with perjury. Every man under the gospel, knows that God desires sinners to be saved, and it is impossible to hide the fact. The true ground on which salvation should be placed is, that he is not to seek his own salvation, but to seek the glory of God; not to hold out the idea that God desires or means he should go to hell.

What did the apostles tell sinners, when they inquired what they must do to be saved? What did Peter tell them at the Pentecost? What did Paul tell the jailer? To repent and forsake their selfishness, and believe the gospel. This is what men must do to be saved.

There is another difficulty in attempting to convert men in this way. It is attempting to convert them by the law, and setting aside the gospel. It is attempting to make them holy, without the appropriate influences to make them holy. Paul tried this way, thoroughly, and found it never would answer. In the 7th of Romans he gives us the result in his own case. It drove him to confess that the law was holy and good, and he ought to obey it; and there it left him in distress, and crying, "The good that I would, I do not, but the evil that I would not, that I do." The law was not able to convert him, and he cries out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Just here the love of God in sending his Son, Jesus Christ, is presented to his mind, and that did the work. In the next chapter he explains it; "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The whole Bible testifies that it is only the influence of the gospel which can bring sinners to obey the law. The law will never do it. Shutting out from the soul that class of motives which cluster around it from the gospel, will never convert a sinner.

I know there may be some persons who suppose they were converted in this way, and that they have submitted to the law, absolutely, and without any influence from the gospel. But was it ever concealed from them for a moment, that Christ had died for sinners, and that if they should repent and believe,

they should be saved? These motives must have had their influence, for all the time that they think they were looking at the naked law, they expected that if they believed they should be saved.

I suppose the error of attempting to convert men by the law, without the gospel, lies here; in the old Hopkinsian notion that men, in order to be saved must be willing to be damned. It sets aside the fact, that this world is, and since the fall always has been, under a dispensation of mercy. If we were under a government of mere law, true submission to God would require this. But men are not, in this sense, under the law, and never have been, for immediately after the fall, God revealed to Adam the intimations of mercy.

An objection arises here in the mind of some, which I will remove.

They say—"Is not the offer of mercy, in the gospel, calculated to produce a selfish religion?"

The offer of mercy may be perverted, as every other good thing may be, and then it may give rise to a selfish religion. And God knew it would be so, when he revealed the gospel. But observe: Nothing is calculated to subdue the rebellious heart of man, but this very exhibition of the benevolence of God, in the offer of mercy.

There was a father who had a stubborn and rebellious son, and he tried long to subdue him by chastisement. He loved his son, and longed to have him virtuous and obedient. But the child seemed to harden his heart against his repeated efforts. At length the poor father was quite discouraged, and burst out into a flood of convulsive weeping—"My son! my son! what shall I do? Can I save you? I have done all that I could to save you; O! what can I do more?" The son had looked at the rod with a brow of brass, but when he saw the tears rolling down his father's furrowed cheeks and heard the convulsive sobs of anguish from his aged bosom, he too burst into tears, and cried out, "Whip me, father! do whip me, as much as you please, but don't cry!" Now the father had found out the way to subdue that stubborn heart. Instead of holding over him nothing but the iron hand of law, he let out his soul before him; and what was the effect? To crush him into hypocritical submission? No, the rod did that. The gushing tears of his

father's love broke him down at once to true submission to his father's will.

So it is with sinners. The sinner braves the wrath of Almighty God, and hardens himself to receive the heaviest bolt of Jehovah's thunder; but when he sees the LOVE of his Heavenly Father's heart, if there is any thing that will make him abhor and execrate himself, that will do it, when he sees God manifested in the flesh, stooping to take human nature, hanging on the cross, and pouring out his soul in tears and bloody sweat and death. Is this calculated to make hypocrites? No, the sinner's heart melts, and he cries out, "O, do anything else, and I can bear it; but the love of the blessed Jesus overwhelms me." This is the very nature of the mind, to be thus influenced. Instead, therefore, of being afraid of exhibiting the love of God to sinners, it is the only way to make them truly submissive and truly benevolent. The law may make hypocrites, but nothing but the gospel can draw out the soul in true love to God.

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## SANCTIFICATION BY FAITH.

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.”—ROMANS iii, 31.

**T**HE apostle had been proving that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, were in their sins, and refuting the doctrine, so generally entertained by the Jews, that they were a holy people and saved by their works. He showed that justification can never be by works, but by faith. He then anticipates an objection, like this, “Are we to understand you as teaching that the law of God is abrogated and set aside by this plan of justification?” “By no means,” says the apostle, “we rather establish the law.” In treating of this subject, I design to pursue the following order:

I. Show that the Gospel method of justification does not set aside or repeal the law.

II. That it rather establishes the law, by producing true obedience to it, and as the only means that does this.

The greatest objection to the doctrine of Justification by Faith has always been that it is inconsistent with good morals, conniving at sin, and opening the flood-gates of iniquity. It has been said, that to maintain that men are not to depend on their own good behaviour for salvation, but are to be saved by faith in another, is calculated to make men regardless of good morals, and to encourage them to live in sin, depending on Christ to justify them. By others, it has been maintained that the Gospel does in fact release from obligation to obey the moral law, so that a more lax morality is permitted under the gospel than was allowed under the law.

I. I am to show that the gospel method of justification, does not set aside the moral law.

It cannot be that this method of justification sets aside the moral law, because the gospel everywhere enforces obedience to the law, and lays down the same standard of holiness.

Jesus Christ adopted the very words of the moral law,—

“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, and thy neighbour as thy self.”

The conditions of the gospel are designed to sustain the moral law.

The gospel requires repentance, as the condition of salvation. What is repentance? The renunciation of sin. The man must repent of his breaches of the law of God, and return to obedience to the law. This is tantamount to a requirement of obedience.

The gospel maintains that the law is right.

If it did not maintain the law to its full extent, it might be said that Christ is the minister of sin.

By the gospel plan, the sanctions of the gospel are added to the sanctions of the law, to enforce obedience to the law.

The apostle says, “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” Thus adding the awful sanctions of the gospel to those of the law, to enforce obedience to the precepts of the law.

II. I am to show that the doctrine of justification by faith produces sanctification, by producing the only true obedience to the law.

By this I mean, that when the mind understands this plan, and exercises faith in it, it naturally produces sanctification. Sanctification is holiness, and holiness is nothing but obedience to the law, consisting in love to God and love to man.

In support of the proposition that justification by faith produces true obedience to the law of God, my first position is, that sanctification never can be produced among selfish or wicked beings, by the law itself, separate from the considerations of the gospel, or the motives connected with justification by faith.

The motives of the law did not restrain those beings from committing sin, and it is absurd to suppose the same motives can *reclaim* them from sin, when they have fallen under the power of selfishness; and when sin is confirmed by habit. The motives of the law lose a great part of their influence, when a being is once fallen. They even exert an opposite influence.

The motives of the law, as viewed by a selfish mind, have a tendency to cause sin to abound. This is the experience of every sinner. When he sees the spirituality of the law, and does not see the motives of the gospel, it raises the pride of his heart, and confirms him in his rebellion. The case of the devil is an exhibition of what the law can do, with all its principles and sanctions, upon a wicked heart. He understands the law, sees its reasonableness, has experienced the blessedness of obedience, and knows full well that to return to obedience would restore his peace of mind. This he knows better than any sinner of our race, who never was holy, can know it, and yet it presents to his mind no such motives as reclaim him, but on the contrary, drive him to a returnless distance from obedience.

When obedience to the law is held forth to the sinner as the condition of life, immediately it sets him upon making self-righteous efforts. In almost every instance, the first effort of the awakened sinner is to obey the law. He thinks he must first make himself better, in some way, before he may embrace the gospel. He has no idea of the simplicity of the gospel plan of salvation by faith, offering eternal life as a mere gratuitous gift. Alarm the sinner with the penalty of the law, and he naturally, and by the very laws of his mind, sets himself to do better, to amend his life, and in some self-righteous manner obtain eternal life, under the influence of slavish fear. And the more the law presses him, the greater are his pharisaical efforts, while hope is left to him, that if he obeys he may be accepted. What else could you expect of him? He is purely selfish, and though he ought to submit at once to God, yet, as he does not understand the gospel terms of salvation, and his mind is of course first turned to the object of getting away from the danger of the penalty, he tries to get up to heaven some other way. I do not believe there is an instance in history of a man who has submitted to God until he has seen that salvation must be by faith, and that his own self-righteous strivings have no tendency to save him.

Again; if you undertake to produce holiness by legal motives, the very fear of failure has the effect to divert attention from the objects of love, from God and Christ. The sinner is all the while compassing Mount Sinai, and taking heed to his footsteps, to see how near he comes to obedience; and how can he get into the spirit of heaven?



Again; the penalty of the law has no tendency to produce love in the first instance. It may increase love in those who already have it, when they contemplate it as an exhibition of God's infinite holiness. The angels in heaven, and good men on earth, contemplate its propriety and fitness, and see in it the expression of the good will of God to his creatures, and it appears amiable and lovely, and increases their delight in God and their confidence towards him. But it is quite the reverse with the selfish man. He sees the penalty hanging over his own head, and no way of escape, and it is not in mind to become enamoured with the Being that holds the thunderbolt over his devoted head. From the nature of mind, he will flee *from* him, not *to* him. It seems never to have been dreamed of, by the inspired writers, that the law could sanctify men. The law is given rather to slay than to make alive, to cut off men's self-righteous hopes for ever, and compel them to flee to Christ.

Again; *Sinners*, under the naked law, and irrespective of the gospel—I say, *sinners*, naturally and necessarily, and of right, under such circumstances, view God as an irreconcilable enemy. They are wholly selfish; and apart from the considerations of the gospel, they view God just as the devil views him. No motive in the law can be exhibited to a selfish mind that will beget love. Can the influence of the penalty do it?

A strange plan of reformation this, to send men to hell to reform them! Let him go on in sin and rebellion to the end of life, and then be punished till he becomes holy. I wonder the devil has not become holy! He has suffered long enough, he has been in hell these thousands of years, and he is no better than he was. The reason is, there is no gospel there, and no Holy Spirit there to apply the truth, and the penalty only confirms his rebellion.

Again: The doctrine of justification by faith can relieve these difficulties. It can produce and it has produced real obedience to the precept of the law. Justification by faith does not set aside the law as a rule of duty, but only sets aside the penalty of the law. And the preaching of justification as a mere gratuity, bestowed on the simple act of faith, is the only way in which obedience to the law is ever brought about. This I shall now show from the following considerations:

It relieves the mind from the pressure of those considerations that naturally tend to confirm selfishness.

While the mind is looking only at the law, it only feels the influence of hope and fear, perpetuating purely selfish efforts. But justification by faith annihilates this spirit of bondage. The apostle says, "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear." This plan of salvation begets love and gratitude to God, and leads the soul to taste the sweets of holiness.

It relieves the mind also from the necessity of making its own salvation its supreme object.

The believer in the gospel plan of salvation finds salvation, full and complete, including both sanctification and eternal life, already prepared ; and instead of being driven to the life of a Pharisee in religion, of laborious and exhausting effort, he receives it as a free gift, a mere gratuity, and is now left free to exercise disinterested benevolence, and to live and labour for the salvation of others, leaving his own soul unreservedly to Christ.

The fact that God has provided and given him salvation as a gratuity, is calculated to awaken in the believer a concern for others, when he sees them dying for the want of this salvation, that they may be brought to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. How far from every selfish motive are those influences. It exhibits God, not as the law exhibits him, as an irreconcilable enemy, but as a grieved and offended *father*, willing to be reconciled, nay, very desirous that his subjects should become reconciled to him and live. This is calculated to beget love. It exhibits God as making the greatest sacrifice to reconcile sinners to himself ; and from no other motive than a pure and disinterested regard to their happiness. Try this in your own family. The law represents God as armed with wrath, and determined to punish the sinner, without hope or help. The gospel represents him as offended, indeed, but yet so anxious they should return to him, that he has made the greatest conceivable sacrifices, out of pure disinterested love to his wandering children.

I once heard a father say, that he had tried in his family to imitate the government of God, and when his child did wrong, he reasoned with him and showed him his faults ; and when he was fully convinced and confounded and condemned, so that he had not a word to say, then the father asked him, "do you deserve to be punished? 'Yes, sir.' I know it, and now if I were to let you go, what influence would it have over the other

children? Rather than do that, I will take the punishment myself." So he laid the ferule on himself, and it had the most astonishing effect on the mind of the child. He had never tried anything so perfectly subduing to the mind as this. And from the laws of mind, it must be so. It affects the mind in a manner entirely different from the naked law.

It brings the mind under an entire new set of influences, and leaves it free to weigh the reasons for holiness, and decide accordingly.

Under the law, none but motives of hope and fear can operate on the sinner's mind. But under the gospel, the influence of hope and fear are set aside, and a new set of considerations presented, with a view of God's entire character, in all the attractions he can command. It gives the most heart-breaking sin-subduing views of God. It presents him to the senses in human nature. It exhibits his disinterestedness. The way Satan prevailed against our first parents was by leading them to doubt God's disinterestedness. The gospel demonstrates the truth, and corrects this lie. The law represents God as the inexorable enemy of the sinner as securing happiness to all who perfectly obey, but thundering down wrath on all who disobey. The gospel reveals new features in God's character, not known before. Doubtless the gospel increases the love of all holy beings, and gives greater joy to the angels in heaven, greatly increasing their love and confidence and admiration, when they see God's amazing pity and forbearance towards the guilty. The law drove the devils to hell, and it drove Adam and Eve from Paradise. But when the blessed spirits see the same holy God waiting on rebels, nay, opening his own bosom and giving his beloved Son for them, and taking such unwearied pains for thousands of years to save sinners, do you think it has no influence in strengthening the motives in their minds to obedience and love?

The devil, who is a purely selfish being, is always accusing others of being selfish. He accused Job of this, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" He accused God to our first parents, of being selfish, and that the only reason for his forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge was the fear that they might come to know as much as himself. The gospel shows what God is. If he was selfish, he would not take such pains to save those whom he might with perfect ease crush to hell. Nothing is so calculated to make selfish persons ashamed of their selfishness, as to see

disinterested benevolence in others. Hence the wicked are always trying to appear disinterested. Let the selfish individual, who has any heart, see true benevolence in others, and it is like coals of fire on his head. The wise man understood this, when he said, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; and if he is thirsty, give him drink ; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Nothing is so calculated to cut down an enemy, and win him over, and make him a friend.

This is what the gospel does to sinners. It shows them, that notwithstanding all they have done to God, God still exercises towards them disinterested love. When he sees God stooping from heaven to save him, and understands that it is indeed *true*, O, how it melts and breaks down the heart, strikes the death blow to selfishness, and wins him over to unbounded confidence and holy love. God has so constituted the mind that it must necessarily do homage to virtue. It must do this, as long as it retains the powers of moral agency. This is as true in hell as in heaven. The devil feels this. When an individual sees that God has no interested motives to condemn him, when he sees that God offers salvation as a mere gratuity, through faith, he cannot but feel admiration of God's benevolence. His selfishness is crushed, the law has done its work, he sees that all his selfish endeavours have done no good ; and the next step is for his heart to go out in disinterested love.

Suppose a man was under sentence of death for rebellion, and had tried many expedients to recommend himself to the government, but failed, because they were all hollow-hearted and selfish. He sees that the government understands his motives, and that he is not really reconciled. He knows himself that they were all hypocritical and selfish, moved by the hope of favour or the fear of wrath, and that the government is more and more incensed at his hypocrisy. Just now let a paper be brought to him from the government, offering him a free pardon on the simple condition that he would receive it as a mere gratuity, making no account of his own works—what influence will it have on his mind ? The moment he finds the penalty set aside, and that he has no need to go to work by any self-righteous efforts, his mind is filled with admiration. Now, let it appear that the government has made the greatest sacrifices to procure this ; his selfishness is slain, and he melts down like a child at his sovereign's feet, ready to obey the law because he loves his sovereign.

All true obedience turns on faith, It secures all the requisite influences to produce sanctification. It gives the doctrines of eternity access to the mind and a hold on the heart. In this world the motives of time are addressed to the senses. The motives that influence the spirits of the just in heaven do not reach us through the senses. But when faith is exercised, the wall is broken down, and the vast realities of eternity act on the mind here with the same kind of influence that they have in eternity. Mind is mind, everywhere. And were it not for the darkness of unbelief, men would live here just as they do in the eternal world. Sinners here would rage and blaspheme, just as they do in hell; and saints would love and obey and praise, just as they do in heaven. Now, faith makes all these things realities, it swings the mind loose from the clogs of the world, and he beholds God, and apprehends his law and his love. In no other way *can* these motives take hold on the mind. What a mighty action must it have on the mind, when it takes hold of the love of Christ! What a life-giving power, when the pure motives of the gospel crowd into the mind and stir it up with energy divine! Every Christian knows, that in proportion to the strength of his faith, his mind is buoyant and active, and when his faith flags, his soul is dark and listless. It is faith alone that places the things of time and eternity in their true comparison, and sets down the things of time and sense at their real value. It breaks up the delusions of the mind, the soul shakes itself from its errors and clogs, and it rises up in communion with God.

## REMARKS.

I.—It is as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural to attempt to convert and sanctify the minds of sinners without the motives of the gospel.

You may press the sinner with the law, and make him see his own character, the greatness and justice of God, and his ruined condition. But hide the motives of the gospel from his mind, and it is all in vain.

II.—It is absurd to think that the offers of the gospel are calculated to beget a selfish hope.

Some are afraid to throw out upon the sinner's mind all the character of God; and they try to make him submit to God, by casting him down in despair. This is not only against the gospel, but it is absurd in itself. It is absurd to think that, in order to

destroy the selfishness of a sinner, you must hide from him the knowledge of how much God loves and pities him, and how great sacrifices he has made to save him.

III.—So far is it from being true, that sinners are in danger of getting false hopes if they are allowed to know the real compassion of God, while you hide this, it is impossible to give him any other than a false hope. Withholding from the sinner who is writhing under conviction, the fact that God has provided salvation as a mere gratuity, is the very way to confirm his selfishness; and if he gets any hope, it must be a false one. To press him to submission by the law alone, is to set him to build a self-righteous foundation.

IV.—So far as we can see, salvation by grace, not bestowed in any degree for our own works, is the only possible way of reclaiming selfish beings.

Suppose salvation was not altogether gratuitous, but that some degree of good works was taken into the account, and *for* those good works in part we were justified—just so far as this consideration is in the mind, just so far there is a stimulus to selfishness. You must bring the sinner to see that he is entirely dependent on free grace, and that a full and complete justification is bestowed, on the first act of faith, as a mere gratuity, and no part of it as an equivalent for any thing he is to do. This alone dissolves the influence of selfishness, and secures holy action.

V.—If all this is true, sinners should be put in the fullest possible possession, and in the speediest manner, of the whole plan of salvation.

They should be made to see the law, and their own guilt, and that they have no way to save themselves; and then, the more fully the whole length and breadth and height and depth of the love of God should be opened, the more effectually will you crush his selfishness, and subdue his soul in love to God. Do not be afraid, in conversing with sinners, to show the whole plan of salvation, and give the fullest possible exhibition of the infinite compassion of God. Show him that, notwithstanding his guilt, the Son of God is knocking at the door and beseeching him to be reconciled to God.

VI.—You see why so many convicted sinners continue so long compassing Mount Sinai, with self-righteous efforts to save themselves by their own works.

How often you find sinners trying to get more feeling, or waiting till they have made more prayers and made greater efforts, and expecting to recommend themselves to God in this way. Why is all this? The sinner needs to be driven off from this, and made to see that he is all the while looking for salvation under the law. He must be made to see that all this is superseded by the gospel offering him all he wants as a mere gratuity. He must hear Jesus, saying, "Ye will not come *unto me* that ye may have life : O, no, you are willing to pray, and go to meeting, and read the Bible, or any thing, but come unto me. Sinner, this is the road ; I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me. I am the resurrection and the life. I am the light of the world. Here, sinner, is what you want. Instead of trying your self-righteous prayers and efforts, here is what you are looking for, only believe, and you shall be saved."

VII.—You see why so many professors of religion are always in the dark.

They are looking at their sins, confining their observations to themselves, and losing sight of the fact that they have only to take right hold of Jesus Christ and throw themselves upon him, and all is well.

VIII.—The law is useful to convict men ; but, as a matter of fact, it never breaks the heart. The gospel alone does that. The degree in which a convert is broken hearted, is in proportion to the degree of clearness with which he apprehends the gospel.

IX.—Converts, if you call them so, who entertain a hope under legal preaching, may have an intellectual approbation of the law, and a sort of dry zeal, but never make mellow, broken-hearted Christians. If they have not seen God in the attitude in which he is exhibited in the gospel, they are not such Christians as you will see sometimes, with a tear trembling in their eye, and their frames shaking with emotion, at the name of Jesus.

X.—You see what needs to be done with sinners who are under conviction, and what with those professors who are in darkness. They must be led right to Christ, and made to take hold of the plan of salvation by faith. It is in vain to expect to do them good in any other way.

## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—MATTHEW v, 48.

**I**N the 43rd verse, the Saviour says, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he 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? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

In discoursing on the subject of CHRISTIAN PERFECTION, I shall show what is not to be understood by this requirement, “Be ye therefore perfect;” or, what Christian Perfection is not. Show what is the perfection here required. That this perfection is a duty. That it is attainable; and, answer some of the objections which are commonly urged against the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

I. I am to show you what Christian Perfection is not.

It is not required that we should have the same natural perfections that God has.

God has two kinds of perfections, natural and moral. His natural perfections constitute his nature essence, or constitution. They are his eternity, immutability, omnipotence, &c. These are called natural perfections, because they have no moral character. They are not voluntary. God has not given them to himself, because he did not create himself, but existed from eternity, with all these natural attributes in full possession. All these God possesses in an infinite degree. These natural perfections are not the perfection here required. The attri-



butes of our nature were created in us, and we are not required to produce any new natural attributes, nor would it be possible. We are not required to possess any of them in the degree that God possesses them.

The perfection required in the text is not perfection of knowledge, even according to our limited faculties.

Christian Perfection, as here required, is not freedom from temptation, either from our constitution or from things that are about us. The mind may be ever so sorely tried with the animal appetites, and yet not sin. The apostle James says, "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." The sin is not in the temptations, but in yielding to them. A person may be tempted by Satan, as well as by the appetites, or by the world, and yet not have sin. All sin consists in voluntarily consenting to the desires.

Neither does Christian perfection imply a freedom from what ought to be understood by the Christian warfare.

The perfection required is not the *infinite* moral perfection which God has ; because man, being a finite creature, is not capable of infinite affections. God being infinite in himself, for him to be perfect is to be infinitely perfect. But this is not required of us.

II. I am to show what Christian perfection is ; or what is the duty actually required in the text.

It is perfect obedience to the law of God. The law of God requires perfect, disinterested, impartial benevolence, love to God and love to our neighbour. It requires that we should be actuated by the same feeling, and to act on the same principles that God acts upon ; to leave self out of the question as uniformly as he does, to be as much separated from selfishness as he is ; in a word, to be in our measure as perfect as God is. Christianity requires that we should do neither more nor less than the law of God prescribes. Nothing short of this is Christian perfection. This is being, morally, just as perfect as God. Everything is here included—to feel as he feels, to love what he loves, and hate what he hates, and for the same reasons that he loves and hates.

God regards every being in the universe according to its real value. He regards his own interests according to their real value in the scale of being, and no more. He exercises the same love towards himself that he requires of us, and for the same reason.

He loves himself supremely, both with the love of benevolence and the love of complacency, because he is supremely excellent. And he requires us to love him just so, to love him as perfectly, as he loves himself. He loves himself with the love of benevolence, or regards his own interest, and glory, and happiness, as the supreme good, because *it is* the supreme good. And he requires us to love him in the same way. He loves himself with infinite complacency, because he knows that he is infinitely worthy and excellent and he requires the same of us. He also loves his neighbour as himself, not in the same degree that he loves himself, but in the same proportion, according to their real value. From the highest angel to the smallest worm, he regards their happiness with perfect love, according to their worth. It is his duty to conform to these principles, as much as it is our duty. He can no more depart from this rule than we can without committing sin ; and for him to do it would be as much worse than for us to do it, as he is greater than we. God is infinitely obligated to do this. His very nature, not depending on his own volition, but uncreated, binds him to this. And he has created us moral beings in his own image, capable of conforming to the same rule with himself. This rule requires us to have the same character with him, to love as impartially, with as perfect love—to seek the good of others with as single an eye as he does. This, and nothing less than this, is Christian Perfection.

III. I am to show that Christian Perfection is a duty.

This is evident from the fact that God requires it, both under the law and under the gospel.

The command in the text, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," is given under the gospel. Christ here commands the very same thing that the law requires. Some suppose that much less is required of us under the gospel, than was required under the law. It is true that the gospel does not require perfection, as the condition of salvation. But no part of the obligation of the law is discharged. The gospel holds those who are under it to the same holiness as those under the law.

I argue that Christian Perfection is a duty, because God has no right to require anything less.

God cannot discharge us from the obligation to be perfect, as I have defined perfection. If he were to attempt it, he would

just so far give a license to sin. He has no right to give any such license. While we are moral beings, there is no power in the universe that can discharge us from the obligation to be perfect. Can God discharge us from the obligation to love him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength? That would be saying that God does not deserve such love. And if he cannot discharge us from the whole law he cannot discharge from any part of it, for the same reason.

Should any one contend that the gospel requires less holiness than the law, I would ask him to say just how much less it requires.

If we are allowed to stop short of perfect obedience, where shall we stop? How perfect are we required to be? Where will you find a rule in the Bible, to determine how much less holy you are allowed to be under the gospel, than you would be under the law? Shall we say each one must judge for himself? Then I ask, if you think it is your duty to be any more perfect than you are now? Probably all would say, Yes. Can you lay down any point at which, when you have arrived, you can say, "Now I am perfect enough; it is true, I have some sin left, but I have gone as far as it is my duty to go in this world?" Where do you get your authority for any such notion? No; the truth is, that all who are truly pious, the more pious they are, the more strongly they feel the obligation to be perfect, as God is perfect.

IV. I will now show that Christian Perfection is attainable, or practicable, in this life.

It may be fairly inferred that Christian Perfection is attainable, from the fact that it is commanded.

Does God command us to be perfect as he is perfect, and still shall we say it is an impossibility? Are we not always to infer, when God commands a thing, that there is a natural possibility of doing that which he commands? I recollect hearing an individual say, he would preach to sinners that they ought to repent, because God commands it; but he would not preach that they *could* repent, because God has no where said that they can. What consummate trifling! Suppose a man were to say he would preach to citizens, that they ought to obey the laws of the country because the government had enacted them, but he would not tell them that they could obey, because it is no where in the statute book enacted that they have the ability. It is

always to be understood, when God requires any thing of men, that they possess the requisite faculties to do it. Otherwise God requires of us impossibilities, on pain of death, and sends sinners to hell for not doing what they were in no sense able to do.

That there is natural ability to be perfect is a simple matter of fact.

There can be no question of this. What is perfection? It is to love the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. That is, it requires us not to exert the powers of somebody else, but our own powers. The law itself goes no farther than to require the right use of the powers you possess. So that it is a simple matter of fact that you possess natural ability, or power, to be just as perfect as God requires.

OBJECTION. Here some may object, that if there is a natural ability to be perfect, there is a moral inability, which comes to the same thing, for inability is inability, call it what you will, and if we have moral inability, we are as really unable as if our inability was natural.

ANSWER 1. There is no more moral inability to be perfectly holy, than there is to be holy at all. So far as moral ability is concerned, you can as well be perfectly holy as you can be holy at all. The true distinction between natural ability and moral ability, is this: Natural ability relates to the powers and faculties of the mind; Moral ability only to the will. Moral inability is nothing else than unwillingness to do a thing. So it is explained by President Edwards, in his Treatise on the Will, and by other writers on the subject. When you ask whether you have moral ability to be perfect, if you mean by it, whether you are willing to be perfect, I answer, No; if you were willing to be perfect you would be perfect, for the perfection required is only a perfect conformity of the will to God's law, or willing right. If you ask then, Are we able to will right? I answer, the question implies a contradiction, in supposing that there can be such a thing as a moral agent unable to choose, or will. President Edwards says expressly, in his chapter on Moral Inability, as you may see, if you will read it, that strictly speaking, there is no such thing as Moral Inability. When we speak of inability to do a thing, if we mean to be understood, of a real inability, it implies a willingness to do it, but

a want of power. To say, therefore, we are unable to will, is absurd. It is saying we will and yet are unable to will, at the same time.

ANSWER 2. But I admit and believe, that there is desperate unwillingness in the case. And if this is what you mean by Moral Inability, it is true. There is a pertinacious unwillingness in sinners to become Christians, and in Christians to become perfect, or to come up to the full perfection required both by the law and gospel. Sinners may strongly wish to become Christians, and Christians may strongly wish or desire to be rid of all their sins, and may pray for it, even with agony. They may think they are willing to be perfect, but they deceive themselves. They may feel, in regard to their sins taken all together, or in the abstract, as if they are willing to renounce them all. But take them up in the detail, one by one, and there are many sins they are unwilling to give up. They wrestle against sin in general, but cling to it in the detail.

I have known cases of this kind, where individuals will break down in such a manner that they think they never will sin again ; and then, perhaps in one hour, something will come up that they are ready to fight for the indulgence, and need to be broken down again and again. Christians actually need to be hunted from one sin after another, in this way, before they are *willing* to give them up ; and after all, are *unwilling* to give up all sins. When they are truly willing to give up all sin, when they have no will of their own, but merge their own will entirely in the will of God, then their bonds are broken. When they will yield absolutely to God's will, then they are filled with all the fullness of God.

After all, the true point of inquiry is this : Have I any right to expect to be perfect in this world ? Is there any reason for me to believe that I can be so completely subdued, that my soul shall burn with a steady flame, and I shall love God wholly, up to what the law requires ? That it is a real duty, no one can deny. But the great query is, Is it attainable ?

I answer, Yes, I believe it is.

Here let me observe, that so much has been said within a few years about Christian Perfection, and individuals who have entertained the doctrine of Perfection have run into so many wild notions, that it seems as if the devil had anticipated the movements of the church, and created such a state of feeling,

that the moment the doctrine of the Bible respecting the sanctification is crowded on the church, one and another cries out, "Why, this is Perfectionism." But I will say, notwithstanding the errors into which some of those called Perfectionists have fallen, there is such a thing held forth in the Bible as Christian Perfection, and that the Bible doctrine on the subject is what nobody need to fear, but what everybody needs to know. I disclaim, entirely, the charge of maintaining the peculiarities, whatever they be, of modern Perfectionists. I have read their publications, and have had much knowledge of them as individuals, and I cannot assent to many of their views. But the doctrine that Christian Perfection is a duty, is one which I have always maintained, and I have been more convinced of it within a few months, that *it is attainable in this life*. Many doubt this, but I am persuaded it is true, on various grounds.

God wills it.

The first doubt which will arise in many minds, is this: "Does God really *will* my sanctification in this world?" I answer: He says he does. The law of God is itself as strong an expression as he can give of his will on the subject, and it is backed up by an infinite sanction. The gospel is but a republication of the same will, in another form. How can God express his will more strongly on this point than he has in the text? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." In the Thessalonians, iv, 3, we are told expressly, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." If you examine the Bible carefully, from one end to the other, you will find that it is everywhere just as plainly taught that God wills the sanctification of Christians in this world, as it is that he wills sinners should repent in this world. And if we go by the Bible, we might just as readily question whether he wills that men should repent, as whether he wills that Christians should be holy. Why should he not reasonably expect it? He requires it. What does he require? When he requires men to repent, he requires that they should love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength. What reason have we to believe that he wills they should repent at all, or love him at all, which is not a reason for believing that he wills they should love him perfectly? Strange logic, indeed! to teach that he wills it in one case, because he requires it, and not admit the same inference in the other. No man can show, from the Bible, that God

does not require perfect sanctification in this world, nor that he does not will it, nor that it is not just as attainable as any degree of sanctification.

I have turned over the Bible with special reference to this point, and thought I would note down on my card, where I have the plan of my discourse, the passages that teach this doctrine. But I found they were altogether too numerous to do it, and that if I collected them all, I should do nothing else this evening, but stand and read passages of scripture. If you have never looked into the Bible with this view, you will be astonished to see how many more passages there are that speak of deliverance from the commission of sin, than there are that speak of deliverance from the punishment of sin. The passages that speak only of deliverance from punishment, are as nothing, in comparison of the others.

*All the promises and prophecies of God*, that respect the sanctification of believers in this world, are to be understood, of course, *of their perfect sanctification*.

What is sanctification, but holiness? When a prophecy speaks of the sanctification of the church, are we to understand that it is to be sanctified only partially? When God *requires* holiness, are we to understand *that* of partial holiness? Surely not. By what principle, then, will you understand it of partial holiness when he *promises* holiness? We have been so long in the way of understanding the Scriptures with reference to the existing state of things, that we lose sight of the real meaning. But if we look only at the language of the Bible, I defy any man to prove that the promises and prophecies of holiness mean any thing short of perfect sanctification, unless the requirements of both the law and gospel are to be understood of partial obedience, which is absurd.

Perfect sanctification is *the great blessing* promised, throughout the Bible.

The apostle says we have exceeding great and precious promises, and what are they, and what is their use? "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these *ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption* that is in the world through lust," 2 Peter, i, 4. If that is not perfect sanctification, I beg to know what is. It is a plain declaration that these "exceeding great and precious promises" are given for this object, that by believing and

appropriating and using them, we might become partakers of the divine nature. And if we will use them for the purposes for which they were put in the Bible, we may become perfectly holy.

Let us look at some of these promises in particular. I will begin with the promise of the Abrahamic covenant. The promise is that his posterity should possess the land of Canaan, and that through him, by the Messiah, all nations should be blessed. The seal of the covenant, circumcision, which every one knows is a type of holiness, shows us what was the principal blessing intended. It was *holiness*. So the apostle tells us, in another place, Jesus Christ was given, that he might sanctify unto himself a peculiar people.

All the purifications and other ceremonies of the Mosaic ritual signified the same thing ; as they are all pointed forward to a Saviour to come, Those ordinances of purifying the body were set forth, every one of them, with reference to the purifying of the mind, or holiness.

Under the gospel, the same thing is signified by baptism ; the washing of the body representing the sanctification of the mind.

In Ezekiel xxxvi, 25, this blessing is expressly promised, as the great blessing of the gospel : “ 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. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments, and do them.”

So it is in Jeremiah xxxiii, 8, “ And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me ; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me.” But it would take up too much time to quote all the passages in the Old Testament prophecies, that represent holiness to be the great blessing of the covenant. I desire you all to search the Bible for yourselves, and you will be astonished to find how uniformly the blessing of sanctification is held up as the principal blessing promised to the world through the Messiah.

Why, who can doubt that the great object of the Messiah's



coming was to sanctify his people? Just after the fall it was predicted that Satan would bruise his heel, but that he should bruise Satan's head. And the apostle John tells that "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." He has undertaken to put Satan under his feet. His object is to win us back to our allegiance to God, to sanctify us, to purify our minds. As it is said in Zech. xiii, 1, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

And Daniel says, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." But it is in vain to name the multitude of these texts. The Old Testament is full of it.

In the New Testament, the first account we have of the Saviour, tells us, that he was called "JESUS, for he shall save his people from their sins." So it is said, "He was manifested to take away our sins," and, "to destroy the works of the devil." In Titus ii, 13, the apostle Paul speaks of the grace of God, or the gospel, as teaching us to deny ungodliness. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." And in Ephesians, v, 25, we learn that "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." I only quote these few passages by way of illustration, to show that the object for which Christ came is to sanctify the church to such a degree that it should be absolutely "holy and without blemish." So in Romans xi, 26, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob; for this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." And in 1 John i, 9, it is said, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

What is it to "cleanse us from *all* unrighteousness," if it is not perfect sanctification? I presume all of you who are here to-night, if there is such a thing promised in the Bible as perfect sanctification, wish to know it. Now, what do you think? In 1 Thessalonians, v, 23, the apostle Paul prays a very remarkable prayer; "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is that? "Sanctify you wholly." Does that mean perfect sanctification? You may think it does not mean perfect sanctification in this world. But the apostle says not only that your whole soul and spirit, but that your "body be preserved blameless." Could an inspired apostle make such a prayer, if he did not believe the blessing prayed for to be possible! But he goes on to say, in the very next verse, "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also *will do it*." Is that true or is it false?

The perfect sanctification of believers is the very *object for which the Holy Spirit is promised*.

To quote the passages that show this, would take up too much time. The whole tenor of Scripture respecting the Holy Spirit proves it. The whole array of gospel means through which the Holy Spirit works, is aimed at this, and adopted to the end of sanctifying the church. All the commands to be holy, all the promises, all the prophecies, all the ordinances, all the providences, the blessings and the judgments, all the duties of religion, are means which the Holy Ghost is to employ for sanctifying the church.

If it is not a practicable duty to be perfectly holy in this world, then it will follow that the devil has so completely accomplished his design in corrupting mankind, that Jesus Christ is at a fault, and has *no way to sanctify his people but to take them out of the world*.

Is it possible that Satan has so got the advantage of God, that God's kingdom cannot be re-established in this world, and that the Almighty has no way but to back out, and to take his saints to heaven, before he can make them holy? Is God's kingdom to be only partially established, and is it to be always so, that the best saints shall one-half of their time be serving the devil? Must the people of God always go drooping and driveling along, in religion, and live in sin, until they get to heaven? What is that stone cut out of a mountain without hands, that is to fill

the earth, if it does not show that there is yet to be a universal triumph of the love of God in the world?

If Perfect Sanctification is not attainable in this world, it must be either from a want of motives in the gospel, or a want of sufficient power in the Spirit of God.

It is said that in another life we may be like God, for we shall see him as he is. But why not here, if we have that faith which is the "substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen?" There is a promise to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness" that "they shall be filled." What is it to be "filled" with righteousness, but to be perfectly holy? And are we never to be filled with righteousness till we die? Are we to go through life hungry and thirsty and unsatisfied? So the Bible has been understood, but it does not read so.

#### OBJECTIONS.

"The power of habit is so great, that we ought not to expect to be perfectly sanctified in this life."

If the power of habit can be so far encroached upon that an impenitent sinner can be converted, why can it not be absolutely broken, so that a converted person may be wholly sanctified? The *greatest* difficulty, surely, is when selfishness has the entire control of the mind, and when the habits of sin are wholly unbroken. This obstacle is so great, in all cases, that no power but that of the Holy Ghost can overcome it, and so great in many instances, that God himself cannot, consistently with his wisdom, use the means necessary to convert the soul. But is it possible to suppose that after he has begun to overcome it, after he has broken the power of selfishness and the obstinacy of habit, and actually converted the individual, that after this God has not resources sufficient to sanctify the soul altogether!

"*Many physical difficulties* have been created by a life of sin, that cannot be overcome or removed by moral means."

This is a common objection. Men feel that they have fastened upon themselves appetites and physical influences, which they do not believe it possible to overcome by moral means. The apostle Paul, in the 7th of Romans, describes a man in great conflict with the body. But in the next chapter he speaks of one who had gotten the victory over the flesh. "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit

is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies of his Spirit that dwelleth in you." This quickening of the body is not spoken of the *resurrection* of the body, but of the influence of the Spirit of God upon the body—the sanctification of the body.

You will ask, "Does the Spirit of God produce a physical change in the body?" I will illustrate it by the case of the drunkard. The drunkard has brought upon himself a diseased state of the body, an unnatural thirst, which is insatiable, and so strong that it seems impossible he should be reclaimed. But very likely you know cases in which they have been reclaimed, and have entirely overcome this physical appetite. I have heard of cases, where drunkards have been made to see the *sin* of drunkenness in such a strong light, that they abhorred strong drink, and for ever renounced it, with such a loathing that they never had the least desire for strong drink again.

I have heard of individuals over whom a life of sin had given to certain appetites a perfect mastery, but in time of revival they have been subdued into perfect quiescence, and these appetites have ever after been as dead as if they had no body. I suppose the fact is, that the mind may be so occupied and absorbed with greater things, as not to give a thought to the things that would revive the vicious appetite. If a drunkard goes by a grocery, or sees people drinking, and allows his mind to run upon it, the appetite will be awakened. The wise man, therefore, tells him to "Look not upon the wine when it is red." But there is no doubt that any appetite of the body may be subdued, if a sufficient impression is made upon the mind to break it up. I believe every real Christian will be ready to admit that this is possible, from his own experience. Have you not, beloved, known times when one great absorbing topic has so filled your mind, and controlled your soul, that the appetites of the body remained, for the time, perfectly neutralised? Now, suppose this state of mind to continue, to become constant; would not all these physical difficulties be overcome, which you speak of as standing in the way of perfect sanctification?

The Bible is against this doctrine, where it says, "there is not a just man on the earth, that liveth and sinneth not."

Suppose the Bible does say that there *is not* one on earth, it

does not say there *cannot be* one. Or, it may have been true at that time, or under dispensation, that there was not one man in the world who was perfectly sanctified; and yet it may not follow that at this time, or under the gospel dispensation, there is no one who lives without sin. "For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did." Heb. 7, 9. *i. e.* The gospel did.

"The apostles admit that they were not perfect."

I know the apostle Paul says in one place, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." But it is not said that he continued so till his death, or that he never did attain to perfect sanctification, and the manner in which he speaks in the remainder of the verse, looks as if he expected to become so. "But I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Nor does it appear to me to be true that in this passage referred to he is speaking of perfect sanctification, but rather of perfect knowledge.

And the apostle John speaks of himself as if he loved God perfectly. But whatever may be the truth as to the actual character of the apostles, it does not follow because they were not perfect that no others can be. They clearly declare it to be a duty, and that they were aiming at it, just as if they expected to attain it in this life. And they command us to do the same.

"But is it not presumption for us to think we can be better than the apostles and primitive Christians?"

What is the presumption in the case? Is it not a fact that we have far greater advantages for religious experience than the primitive churches? The benefit of their experience, the complete scriptures, the state of the world, the near approach of the millenium, all give us the advantage over the primitive believers. Are we to suppose the church is always to stand in regard to religious experience, and never to go ahead in any thing? What scripture is there for this? Why should not the church be always growing better? It seems to be the prevailing idea that the church is to be always looking back to the primitive saints as the standard. I suppose the reverse of this is a duty, and that we ought to be always aiming at a much higher standard than theirs. I believe the church must go far ahead of the primitive Christians, before the millenium can come. I leave out of view the apostles, because it does not clearly appear but what they became fully sanctified.

“But so many profess to be perfect, who are not so, that I cannot believe in perfection in this life.”

How many people profess to be rich, who are not. Will you therefore say, you cannot believe any body is rich? Fine logic!

“So many who profess perfection have run into error and fanaticism, that I am afraid to think of it.”

I find in history, that a sect of Perfectionists has grown out of every great and general revival that ever took place. And this is exactly one of the devil's master-pieces, to counteract the effects of a revival. He knows that if the church were brought to the proper standard of holiness, it would be a speedy death blow to his power on earth, and he takes this course to defeat the efforts of the church for elevating the standard of piety, by frightening Christians from marching right up to the point, and aiming at living perfectly conformed to the will of God. And so successful has he been, that the moment you begin to crowd the church up to be holy, and give up all their sins, somebody will cry out, “Why, this leads to Perfectionism;” and thus give it a bad name and put it down.

“But do you really think anybody ever has been perfectly holy in this world?”

I have reason to believe there have been many. It is highly probable that Enoch and Elijah were free from sin, before they were taken out of the world. And in different ages of the church there have been numbers of Christians who were intelligent and upright, and had nothing that could be said against them, who have testified that they themselves lived free from sin. I know it is said, in reply, that they must have been proud, and that no man would say he was free from sin for any other motive but pride. But I ask, why may not a man say he is free from sin, if it is so, without being proud, as well as he can say he is converted without being proud? Will not the saints say it in heaven, to the praise of the grace of God, which has thus crowned his glorious work? And why may they not say it now, from the same motive? I do not myself profess now to have attained perfect sanctification, but if I had attained it, if I felt that God had really given me the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, and made me free from sin, would I keep it a secret, locked up in my own breast, and let my brethren stumble on in ignorance of what the grace of God can do? Never. I would tell them, that they might expect complete deliverance, if they would

only lay hold on the arm of help which Christ reaches forth, to save his people from their sins.

I have heard people talk like this, that if a Christian really was perfect, he would be the last person that would tell of it. But would you say of a person who professed conversion, "If he was really converted, he would be the last person to tell of it?" On the contrary, is it not the first impulse of a converted heart to say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul!" Why then should not the same desire exist in one who feels that he has obtained sanctification? Why all these suspicions, and refusing to credit evidence? If any one gives evidence of great piety, if his life is irreproachable, and his spirit not to be complained of, if he show the very spirit of the Son of God, and if such a person testifies that after great struggles and agonizing prayer God has given him the victory, and his soul is set at liberty by the power of divine grace; why are we not bound to receive his testimony, just as much as when he says he is converted? We always take such testimony, so far. And now, when he says he has gone farther, and got the victory over all sin, and that Christ has actually fulfilled his promise in this respect, why should we not credit this also?

I have recently read Mr. Wesley's "Plain account of Christian Perfection," a book I never saw until lately. I find some expressions in it to which I should object, but I believe it is rather the expression than the sentiments. And I think, with this abatement, it is an admirable book, and I wish every member of this church would read it. An edition is in the press, in this city. I would also recommend the memoir of James Brainerd Taylor, and I wish every Christian would get it, and study it. I have read the most of it three times within a few months. From many things in that book, it is plain that he believed in the doctrine that Christian perfection is a duty, and that it is attainable by believers in this life. There is nothing published which shows that he professed to have attained it, but it is manifest that he believed it to be attainable. But I have been told that much which is found in his diary on this subject, as well as some things in his letters, were suppressed by his biographer, as not fitted for the eye of the church in her present state. I believe if the whole could come to the light, that it would be seen that he was a firm believer in this doctrine. These books should be read and pondered by the church.

I have now in my mind an individual, who was a member of the church, but very worldly, and when a revival came he opposed it, at first ; but afterwards he was awakened, and, after an awful conflict, he broke down, and has ever since lived a life of the most devoted piety, labouring and praying incessantly, like his blessed Master, to promote the kingdom of God. I have never heard this man say he thought he was perfect, but I have often heard him speak of the duty and practicability of being perfectly sanctified. And if there is a man in the world who is so, I believe he is one.

People have the strangest notions on this subject. Sometimes you will hear them argue against Christian Perfection on this ground—that a man who was perfectly holy could not live, could not exist in this world. I believe I have talked just so myself, in time past. I know I have talked like a fool on the subject. Why, a saint who was perfect would be more alive than ever to the good of his fellow men. Could not Jesus Christ live on earth? He was perfectly holy. It is thought that if a person was perfectly sanctified, and loved God perfectly, he would be in such a state of *excitement*, that he could not remain in the body, could neither eat nor sleep, nor attend to the ordinary duties of life. But there is no evidence of this. The Lord Jesus Christ was a man, subject to all the temptations of other men. He also loved the Lord his God with all his heart and soul and strength. And yet it does not appear that he was in such a state of excitement that he could not both eat and sleep, and work at his trade as a carpenter, and maintain perfect health of body and perfect composure of mind. And why needs a saint that is perfectly sanctified, to be carried away with uncontrollable excitement, or killed with intense emotion, any more than Jesus Christ? There is no need of it, and Christian Perfection implies no such thing.

## REMARKS.

We can see now the reasons why there is no more perfection in the world.

Christians do not believe that it is the will of God, or that God is willing they should be perfectly sanctified in this world.

They know he commands them to be perfect, as he is perfect, but they think that he is secretly unwilling, and does not really wish them to be so ; “ Otherwise,” say they, “ why does he not



do more for us, to make us perfect?" No doubt, God prefers their remaining as they are, to using any other means or system of influences to make them otherwise; because he sees that it would be a greater evil to introduce a new system of means than to let them remain as they are. Where one of the evils is unavoidable, he chooses the least of the two evils, and who can doubt that he prefers their being perfect in the *circumstances in which they are*, to their sinning in these circumstances. Sinners reason just as these professors reason. They say, "I don't believe he wills my repentance; if he did, he would make me repent." Sinner, God may prefer your continued impenitence, and your damnation, to using any other influences than he does use to make you repent. But for you to infer from this, that he does not wish you to yield to the influences he does use, is strange logic! Suppose your servant should reason so, and say, "I don't believe my master means I should obey him, because he don't stand by me all day, to keep me at work." Is that a just conclusion? Very likely the master's time is so valuable, that it would be a greater evil to his business, than for that servant to stand still all day.

So it is in the government of God. If God were to bring all the power of his government to bear on one individual, he might save that individual, while at the same time, it would so materially derange his government, that it would be a vastly greater evil than for that individual to go to hell. In the same way, in the case of a Christian, God has furnished him with all the means of sanctification, and required him to be perfect, and now he turns round and says, "God does not really prefer my being perfect; if he did, he would make me so." This is just the argument of the impenitent sinner, and no better in one case than the other. The plain truth is, God does desire, of both, that in the circumstances in which they are placed, they should do just what he commands them to do.

They do not expect it themselves.

The great part of the church do not really expect to be any more pious than they are.

Much of the time, they do not even desire perfect sanctification.

They are satisfied with their hunger and thirst after righteousness, and do not expect to be filled.

Here let me say, that hunger and thirst after holiness *is not*

*holiness.* The desire of a thing is not the thing desired. If they hunger and thirst after holiness, they ought to give God no rest, till he comes up to his promise, that they shall be filled with holiness, or made perfectly holy.

They overlook the great design of the gospel.

Too long has the church been in the habit of thinking that the great design of the gospel is, to save men from the punishment of sin, whereas its real design and object is to deliver men *from sin*. But Christians have taken the other ground, and think of nothing but that they are to go on in sin, and all they hope for is to be forgiven, and when they die made holy in heaven. Oh, if they only realised that the whole frame-work of the gospel is designed to break the power of sin, and fill men on earth with all the fulness of God, how soon there would be one steady blaze of love in the hearts of God's people all over the world!

The promises are not understood, and not appropriated by faith.

If the church would read the Bible, and lay hold of every promise there, they would find them exceeding great and precious. But now the church loses its inheritance, and remains ignorant of the extent of the blessings she may receive. Had I time to-night, I could lead you to some promises which, if you would only get hold of and appropriate, you would know what I mean.

They seek it by the law, and not by faith.

How many are seeking sanctification by their own resolutions and works, their fastings and prayers, their endeavours and activity, instead of taking right hold of Christ, by faith, for sanctification, as they do for justification. It is all *work, work, work*, when it should be by faith in "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and *sanctification*, and redemption." When they go and take right hold of the strength of God, they will be sanctified. Faith will bring Christ right into the soul, and fill them with the same spirit that breathes through himself. These dead works are nothing. It is faith that must sanctify, it is faith that purifies the heart, that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, takes hold of Christ and brings him into the soul, to dwell there the hope of glory; that the life which we live here should be by faith in the Son of God. It is from not knowing or not regarding this, that there is so little holiness in the church.

And finally,

From the want of the right kind of dependence.

Instead of taking scriptural views of their dependence and seeing where their strength is, and realising how willing God is to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask, now and continually, and thus taking hold and holding on by the arm of God, they sit down, in unbelief and sin, to wait God's time, and call this depending on God. Alas ! how little is felt, after all this talk about dependence on the Holy spirit, how little is really felt of it, and how little is there of the giving up of the whole soul to his control and guidance, with faith in his power to enlighten, to lead, to sanctify, to kindle the affections, and fill the soul continually with all the fulness of God !

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## CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

(SECOND LECTURE.)

“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”—MATTHEW v, 48.

IN my previous lecture, I pursued the following order. 1. I showed what is implied in being perfect. 2. What Christian perfection is. 3. That it is a duty. 4. That it is attainable in this life. 5. Answered some objections, and then gave some reasons why so many persons are not perfect. To-night, my object is to mention some additional causes which prevent the great body of Christians from attaining perfect sanctification. As a matter of fact, we know that the church is not sanctified, and we ought to know the reasons. If the defect is in God, we ought to know it. If he has not provided a sufficient revelation, or if the power of the Holy Spirit is not adequate to sanctify his people in this world, we ought to understand it, so as not to perplex ourselves with idle endeavours after what is unattainable. And if the fault is in us, we ought to know it, and the true reasons ought to be understood, lest by any means we should charge God foolishly, even in thought, by imagining that he has required of us that which he has furnished us with no adequate means of attaining.

I. The first general reason, which I shall mention, for persons not being sanctified, is that they seek sanctification *by works*, and not *by faith*.

The religion of works assumes a great variety of forms ; and it is interesting to see the ever-varying, shifting forms it takes.

One form is where men are aiming to live so as to render their damnation unjust. It matters not, in this case, whether they deem themselves Christians or not, if they are in fact trying to live so as to render it unjust for God to send them to hell. This was the religion of the ancient Pharisees. And there are not a

few, in the present day, whose religion is purely of this character. You will often find them out of the church, and perhaps ready to confess that they have never been born again. But yet they speak of their own works in a way to make it manifest that they think themselves quite too good to be damned.

Another form of the religion of works is, where persons are not aiming so much to render it unjust in God to damn them, but are seeking by their works to recommend themselves to the mercy of God. They know they deserve to be damned, and will for ever deserve it. But they also know that God is merciful; and they think that if they live honest lives, and do many kind things to the poor, it will so recommend them to the general mercy of God, that he will not impute their iniquities to them, but will forgive their sins and save them. This is the religion of most modern moralists. Living under the gospel, they know they cannot be saved by their works, and yet they think that if they go to meeting, and help support the minister, and do this and that and the other kind of good works, it will recommend them to God's mercy sufficiently for salvation. So far as I understand the system of religion held by modern Unitarians, this must be their system. Whether they understand it so, or admit it to be so, or not, as far as I can see, it comes to this. They set aside the atonement of Christ, and do not expect to be saved by the righteousness of Jesus Christ; and I know not on what they do depend, but this. They seem to have a kind of sentimental religion, and on this, with their morality and their liberality, they depend to recommend them to the mercy of God. On this ground they expect to receive the forgiveness of their sins, and to be saved.

Another form of the religion of works is, where persons are endeavouring *to prepare themselves to accept of Christ.*

They understand that salvation is only through Jesus Christ. They know that they cannot be saved by works, nor by the general mercy of God, without an atonement, and that the only way to be saved is by faith in Christ. But they have heard the relations of the experience of others, who went through a long process of distress before they submitted to Christ and found peace in believing. And they think a certain preparatory process is necessary, and that they must make a great many prayers, and run hither and thither to attend meetings, and lie awake many nights, and suffer so much distress, and perhaps fall into despair, and

then they shall be in a situation to accept of Christ. This is the situation of many convicted sinners. When they are awakened, and get so far as to find that they cannot be saved by their own works, then they set themselves to prepare to receive Christ. Perhaps some of you, who are here to-night, are in just this case. You dare not come to Christ just as you are, when you have made so few prayers, and attended so few meetings, and felt so little distress, and done so little and been so little engaged. And so, instead of going right to Christ for all you need, as a poor lost sinner, throwing yourself unreservedly into his hands, you set yourself to lash your mind into more conviction and distress, in order to prepare you to accept of Christ. Such cases are just about as common as convicted sinners are. How many there are who abound in such works, and seem determined they will not fall down at once at the feet of Christ. It is not necessary to go into an argument here to show that they are growing no better by all this process. There is no love to God in it, and no faith, and no religion. It is all mere mockery of God, and hypocrisy and sin. There may be a great deal of feeling, but it is of no use; it brings them in fact no nearer to Christ; and after all, they have to do the very thing at last, which they might have done just as well at first.

Now suppose an individual should take it into his head that this is the way to become holy. Every Christian can see that it is very absurd, and that however he may multiply such works, he is not beginning to approach to holiness. The first act of holiness is to believe, to take hold of Christ by faith. And if a Christian, who is awakened to feel the need of sanctification, undertakes to go through a preparatory process of self-created distress, before he applies to Christ, it is just as absurd as for an awakened sinner to do it.

Another form of the religion of works is, where individuals *perform works to beget faith and love.*

The last mentioned class was where individuals are preparing to come to Christ. Here we suppose them to have come to Christ, and that they have accepted him, and are real Christians; but having backslidden they set themselves to perform many works to beget faith and love, or to beget and perfect a right state of feeling. This is one of the most common and most subtle forms in which the religion of works shows itself at the present day.

Now, this is very absurd. It is an attempt to produce holiness by sin. For if the feelings are not right the act is sin. If the act does not proceed from faith and love, whatever they may do is sin. How idle, to think that a person, by multiplying sins, can beget holiness! And yet it is perfectly common for persons to think they can beget holiness by a course of conduct that is purely sinful. For certainly, any act that does not spring from love already existing, is sinful. The individual acts not from the impulse of faith that works by love and purifies the heart, but he acts without faith and love, with a design to beget those affections by such acts as these.

It is true, when faith and love exist, and are *the propelling motive* to action, the carrying of them out in action has a tendency to increase them. This arises from the known laws of mind, by which every power and every faculty gains strength by exercise. But the case supposed is where individuals have left their first love, if ever they had any, and then set themselves, without faith or love, to bustle about and warn sinners, or the like, under the idea that this is the way to wake up, or to become holy, or to get into the state of feeling that God requires. It is really most unphilosophical and absurd, and ruinous, to think of waking up faith in the soul, where it does not exist, by performing outward acts from some other motive. It is mocking God, to pretend, by doing things from wrong motives, to produce a holy frame of mind. By and by, I shall show where the deception lies, and how it comes to pass that any persons should ever dream of such a way of becoming sanctified. The fact is too plain to be proved, that pretending to serve God in such a way, so far from having any tendency to produce a right spirit, is in fact grieving the Holy Ghost and insulting God.

So far as the philosophy of the thing is concerned, it is just like the conduct of convicted sinners. But there is one difference, the sinner, in spite of all his wickedness, may by and by learn his own helplessness, and actually renounce all his own works and feel that his continued refusal to come to Christ, so far from being a preparation for coming, is only heaping up so many sins against God. But it is otherwise with those who think themselves to be already Christians, as I will explain by and by.

It is often remarked, by careful observers in religion, that many persons who abound in religious acts, are often the most hardened, and the farthest removed from spiritual feeling. If

performing religious duties was the way to produce religious feeling, we should expect that ministers, and leaders in the church, would be always the most spiritual. But the fact is, that where faith and love are not in exercise, in proportion as persons abound in outward acts without the inward life, they become hardened and cold, and full of iniquity. They may have been converted, but have backslidden, and so long as they are seeking sanctification in this way, by multiplying their religious duties, running round to protracted meetings, or warning sinners, without any spiritual life, they will never find it, but will in fact become more hardened and stupid. Or if they get into an excitement in this way, it is a spurious superficial state of mind that has nothing holy in it.

II. Another reason why so many persons are not sanctified is this : *They do not receive Christ in all his relations, as he is offered in the gospel.*

Most people are entirely mistaken here, and they will never go ahead in sanctification, until they learn that there is a radical error in the manner in which they attempt to attain it. Take a case : Suppose an individual who is convinced of sin. He sees that God might in justice send him to hell, and that he has no way in which he can make satisfaction. Now tell him of Christ's atonement, show him how Christ died to make satisfaction, so that God can be just and yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus ; he sees it to be right and sufficient, and exactly what he needs, and he throws himself upon Christ, in faith for justification. He accepts him as his justification, and that is as far as he understands the gospel. He believes, and is justified, and feels the pardon of his sins. Now, here is the very attitude in which most convicted sinners stop. They take up with Christ in the character in which, as sinners, they most feel the need of a Saviour, as the propitiation of their sins, to make atonement and procure forgiveness, and there they stop. And after that, it is often exceedingly difficult to get their attention to what Christ offers beyond. Say what you will in regard to Christ as the believer's wisdom and righteousness and his sanctification, and all his relations as a Saviour from sin—they do not feel their need of him sufficiently to make them really throw themselves upon him in these relations. The converted person feels at peace with God, joy and gratitude fill his heart, he rejoices in having found a Saviour that can stand between him and his Judge, he



may have really submitted, and for a time, he follows on in the way of obedience to God's commandments. But, by and by, he finds the workings of sin in his members, unsubdued pride, his old temper breaking forth, and a multitude of enemies assaulting his soul, from within and without, and he is not prepared to meet them. Hitherto, he has taken up Christ and regarded him, mainly, in one of his relations, that of a Saviour to save him from hell. If I am not mistaken, the great mass of professing Christians lose sight, almost altogether, of many of the most interesting relations which Christ sustains to believers. Now, when the convert finds himself thus brought under the power of temptation, and drawn into sin, he needs to receive Christ in a new relation, to know more of the extent of his provision, to make a fresh application to him, and give a new impulse to his mind to resist temptation. This is not fully apprehended by many Christians. They never really view Christ, under his name Jesus, because he saves his people *from their sins*. They need to receive him *as a King*, to take the throne in their hearts, and rule over them with absolute and perfect control, bringing every faculty and every thought into subjection. The reason why the convert thus falls under the power of temptation, is that he has not submitted his own will to Christ, as a king, in *every thing*, as perfectly as he ought, but is, after all, exercising his own self-will in some particulars.

Again : There are a multitude of what are called sins of ignorance, which need not be. Christians complain that they cannot understand the Bible, and there are many things concerning which they are always in doubt. Now, what they need is, to receive Christ as wisdom, to accept him in his relation as the source of light and knowledge. Who of you now attach a full and definite idea to the text which says, "We are in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption?" What do you understand by it? It does not say he is a justifier, and a teacher, and a sanctifier, and a redeemer; but that he is wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. What does that mean? Until Christians shall find out by experience, and know what that scripture meaneth, how can the church be sanctified? The church is now just like a branch plucked off from a vine; "Except ye abide in me ye cannot bear fruit." Suppose a branch had power voluntarily to separate itself from the vine, and then

should undertake to bring forth fruit, what would you think ? So with the church ; until Christians will go to the eternal source of sanctification, and wisdom, and redemption, it will never become holy. If they would become, by faith, absolutely united with him, in all those offices and relations in which he is offered, they would know what sanctification is.

I may, at some other time, take this text as the foundation of a separate discourse, and discuss these points, one by one, and show what this means. I will only say, at present, as much as this : that it means just what it says, and there is no need of explaining it away as has too commonly been done. And when the church shall once take hold of Christ, in *all* his relations, as here set forth, they will know what it is, and will see that he is the light and the life of the world. To be sanctified by him, they must so embrace him, as to receive from him those supplies of grace and knowledge, which alone can purify the soul and give the complete victory over sin and Satan.

I will mention some reasons why Christians do not receive Christ in all his relations.

They may not have those particular convictions, that are calculated to make them deeply feel the necessity of a Saviour in those relations.

If an individual is not deeply convicted of his own depravity, and has not learned intimately his own sinfulness, and if he does not know experimentally, as a matter of fact, that he needs help to overcome the power of sin, he will never receive Jesus Christ into his soul *as a king*. When men undertake to help themselves out of sin, and feel strong in their own strength to cope with their spiritual enemies, they never receive Christ fully, nor rely on him solely to save them from sin. But when they have tried to keep themselves by their own watchfulness and prayers, and binding themselves by resolutions and oaths to obey God, and find that, after all, if left to themselves, there is nothing in them but depravity, then they feel their own helplessness, and begin to inquire what they shall do ? The Bible teaches all this plainly enough, and if people would believe the Bible, converts would know their own helplessness, and their need of a Saviour to save from sin, at the outset. But, as a matter of fact, they do not receive nor believe the Bible on this subject, until they have set themselves to work out a righteousness of their own, and thus have found out by experiment that they are nothing without

Christ. And therefore they do not receive him in this relation, till after they have spent, it may be, years, in these vain and self-righteous endeavours to do the work of sanctification themselves. Having begun in the spirit they are trying to be made perfect by the flesh.

Others, when they see their own condition, do not receive Christ as a Saviour from sin, because they are, after all, unwilling to abandon all sin.

They know that if they give themselves up entirely to Christ, all sin must be abandoned ; and they have some idol which they are unwilling to give up.

Sometimes, when persons are deeply convinced, and anxious to know what they shall do to get rid of sin, they do not apply to Christ in faith, because they do not know what they have a right to expect from him.

There are many who seem to suppose they are under a fatal necessity to sin, and that there is no help for it, but they must drag along this load of sin till their death. They do not absolutely charge God foolishly, and say in words that he has made no provision for such a case as this. But they seem to suppose that Christ's atonement being so great as to cover all sins, and God's mercy being so great, if they do go on in sin all their days, as they expect they shall, he will forgive all at last, and it will be just about as well in the end, as if they had been really sanctified. They do not see that the gospel has made provision sufficient to rid us for ever of the commission of all sin. They look at it as merely a system of pardon, leaving the sinner to drag along his load of sin to the very gate of heaven ; instead of a system to break up the very power of sin in the mind. The consequence is, they make very little account of the promises. O, how little use do Christians make of those exceeding great and precious promises, in the Bible, which were given expressly for this purpose, that we might become partakers of the divine nature ! Here God has suited his promises to our exigencies, for this end, and we have only to draw upon him for all that we want, and we shall have whatever we need for our sanctification. Hear the Saviour say, " What things soever ye desire, when he pray, *believe* that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

The fact is, Christians do not really believe much that is in the Bible. Now, suppose you were to meet God, and you knew it was God himself, speaking to you, and he should reach out a

book in his hand, and tell you to take that book, and that the book contains exceeding great and precious promises, of all that you need, or ever can need, to resist temptation, to overcome sin, and to make you perfectly holy, and fit you for heaven; and then he tells you that whenever you are in want of any thing for this end, you need only take the appropriate promise, and present it to him at any time, and he will do it. Now, if you were to receive such a book, directly from the hand of God, and knew that God had written it for you, with his own hand, would you not believe it? And would you not read it a great deal more than you now read the Bible? How eager you would be to know all that was in it! And how ready to apply the promises in time of need! You would want to get it all by heart, and often repeat it all through, that you might keep your mind familiar with its contents, and be always ready to apply the promises you read! Now, the truth is, the Bible is that book. It is written just so, and filled with just such promises; so that the Christian, by laying hold of the right promise, and pleading it, can always find all that he needs for his spiritual benefit.

Christ is a complete Saviour. All the promises of God are in him *Yea*, and in him *Amen*, to the glory of God the Father. That is, God has promised in the second person of the Trinity, in the person of Jesus Christ, and made them all certain through him. Now, the thing which is needed is, that Christians should understand these promises, and believe them, and in every circumstance of need apply them, for sanctification. Suppose they lack wisdom. Let them go to God, and plead the promise. Suppose they cannot understand the scriptures, or the path of duty is not plain. The promise is plain enough, take that. Whatever they lack of wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, only let them go to God in faith, and take hold of the promise, and if he does not prove false, they will assuredly receive all that they need.

Another reason why many do not receive Christ in all his relations, is that they are too proud to relinquish all self-dependence or reliance on their own wisdom and their own will.

How great a thing it is, for the proud heart of man to give up its own wisdom, and knowledge, and will, and every thing, to God! I have found this the greatest of all difficulties. Doubtless all find it so. The common plea is, "Our reason was given us, to be exercised in religion, but what is the use, if we may not

rely on it, or follow it?" But there is one important discrimination to be made, which many overlook. Our reason was given us to use in religion; but it is not in the proper province of reason to ask whether what God says is reasonable, but to show us the infinite reasonableness of believing that *all* which God says must be true, whether we in our ignorance and blindness can see the reasonableness of it or not. And if we go beyond this, we go beyond the proper province of reason. But how unwilling the proud heart of man is to lay aside all its own vain wisdom, and become like a little child, under the teaching of God! The apostle says, "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." There is a vast meaning in this. He that does not receive Christ alone as his wisdom, knows nothing in religion to any purpose. If he is not taught by Jesus Christ, he has not learned the first lesson of Christianity. So, again, "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son revealeth him." The individual who has learned this lesson, feels that he has not one iota of knowledge in religion, that is of any value, only as he is taught by Jesus Christ. For it is written, "And they shall all be taught of God."

#### REMARKS.

I. You see what kind of preaching the church now needs.

The church needs to be searched thoroughly, shown their great defects, and brought under conviction, and then pointed to where their great strength lies. With their everlasting parade of dead works, they need to be shown how poor they are. "Thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Until Christians are shown their poverty, and the infinite emptiness and abominable wickedness of their dead works, and then shown just where their help is, and that it is by *faith alone* they can ever be sanctified, the church will go farther and farther from God, till it will have only the form of godliness, denying the power thereof.

II. When you see the Christian character defective in any particular, you may always know that the individual needs to receive Christ more fully in the very relation which is calculated to supply this defect.

The defect, whatever it be, in the character of any believer,

will never be remedied, until he sees the relation of Christ to that part of his character, so as by faith to take hold of Christ and bring him in to remedy that defect. Suppose a person is naturally penurious and selfish, and reluctant to act in a disinterested manner; he will never remedy that defect, until he receives Christ as his pattern, and the selfishness is driven out of his heart by imbuing his very soul with the infinite benevolence of the Saviour. So it is with regard to any other defect; he will never conquer it, until you make him see that the infinite fulness of Christ is answerable to that very want.

III. You see the necessity there is that ministers should be persons of deep experience in religion.

It is easy for even a carnal mind to preach so as to bring sinners under conviction. But until the tone of sanctification is greatly raised among ministers, it is not to be expected that the piety of the church will be greatly elevated. Those Christians who have experience of these things should therefore be much in prayer for ministers, that the sons of Levi may be purified, that the leaders of Israel may take hold of Christ for the sanctification of their own hearts, and then they will know what to say to the church on the subject of holiness.

IV. Many seek sanctification by works, who do not know that they are seeking in this way.

They profess that they are seeking sanctification only by faith. They tell you they know very well that it is in vain to seek it in their own strength. But yet the results show, how conclusively, that they are seeking by works, and not by faith. It is of the last importance that you should know whether you are seeking sanctification by works, or by faith, for all seeking of it by works is absurd, and never will lead to any good results. How will you know?

Take again the case of a convicted sinner. Sinner, how are you seeking salvation? The sinner replies, "By faith, of course, every body knows that no sinner can be saved by works." I say, No, you are seeking salvation by works. How shall I show it to him? Sinner, do you believe in Christ? "I do." But does he give you peace with God? "Oh, no, not yet, but I am trying to get more conviction, and to pray more, and be more earnest in seeking, and I hope he will give me peace if I persevere." Now, every Christian sees, at a glance, that with all his pretensions to the contrary, this man is seeking salvation by

works. And the way to prove it to him is exceedingly simple. It is evident he is seeking by works, because he is relying on certain preparatory steps and processes to be gone through, *before* he exercises saving faith. He is not ready now to accept of Christ, he is conscious he is not, but thinks he must bring himself into a different state of mind as a preparation, and it is at this he is aiming. That is works. No matter what the state of mind is, that he aims at as preparatory to coming to Christ; if it is anything that must precede faith, or any preparatory process for faith, and he is trying *without faith* to get into a proper state of mind to have faith, it is all the religion of works.

Now, how common is just such a state of mind among Christians who profess to be seeking sanctification. You say, you must mortify sin, but the way you go about it is by a self-righteous preparation, seeking to recommend yourselves to Christ as worthy to receive the blessing, instead of coming right to Christ, as an unworthy and ruined beggar, to receive at once, by faith, the very blessing you need. No efforts of your own are going to make you any better. Like a person in a horrible pit of miry clay, every struggle of your own sinks you deeper in the clay. You have no need of any such thing, and all your endeavours, instead of bringing you any nearer to Christ, are only sinking you down in the filth, farther and farther from God. It is not even the beginning of help.

The sinner, by his preparatory seeking, gains no advantage. There he lies, dead in trespasses and sins, as far removed from spiritual life, or holiness, as ever a dead corpse was from natural life; until at length, ceasing from his own dead works, he comes to the conviction that there is nothing he can do for himself but to go *now, just as he is*, and submit to Christ. As long as he thinks there is something he must do first, he never feels that now is God's time of salvation. And as long as the Christian is seeking sanctification in the way of works, he never feels that now is God's time to give him the victory over sin.

V. Multitudes deceive themselves in this matter, by the manner in which they have seen certain old-fashioned, Antinomian churches roused up, who were dragging along in death.

Where such a church has been found, that had been fed on dry doctrine till they were about as stupid as the seats they sat on, the first thing has been to rouse them up to do something, and that very fact perhaps would bring such a church under con-

viction, and lead them to repentance. It is not because there is any religion in these *doings* of professors in such a state; but it shows them their deficiencies, and their unfitness to be members of the church, and awakens their consciences. So it is, sometimes, when a careless sinner has been set to praying. Everybody knows there is no piety in such prayers, but it calls his attention to the subject of religion, and gives the Holy Spirit an opportunity to bring the truth full upon his conscience. But if you take a man who has been in the habit of praying from his childhood, and whose formal prayers have made him as cold as a stone, praying will never bring that man under conviction, till you show him what is the true character of his prayers, and *stop* his ungodly and heaven-daring praying.

In many cases, where a church has sunk down in stupidity, the most effectual way to rouse them has been found to be, setting them to warning sinners of their danger. This would get the attention of the church to the subject of religion, and perhaps bring many of them to repentance. Hence many have formed a general rule, that the way for a church to wake up, always is, to go to work and warn sinners. They do not discriminate, here, between the habits of different churches, and the different treatment they consequently require. Whereas, if you take what is called a "working church," where they have been in the habit of enjoying revivals, and holding protracted meetings, you will find there is no difficulty in rousing up the church to act, and bustle about and make a noise. But as a general rule, unless there is great wisdom and faithfulness in dealing with the church, every succeeding revival will make their religion more and more superficial; and their minds will become more hardened instead of being convicted, by their efforts. Tell such a church they are self-righteous, and that there is no Holy Ghost in their bustling, and they will be affronted, and stare at you, "Why, don't you know that the way to wake up in religion is to go to work in religion?" Whereas, the very fact that activity has become a habit with them, shows that they require a different course. They need first to be thoroughly probed and searched, and made sensible of their deficiencies, and brought humble and believing to the foot of the cross, for sanctification.

When I was an evangelist, I laboured in a church that had enjoyed many revivals, and it was the easiest thing in the world



to get the church to go out and bring in sinners to the meetings ; and the impenitent would come in and hear, but there was no deep feeling, and no faith in the church. The minister saw that this way of proceeding was ruining the church, and that each successive revival, brought about in this manner, made the converts more and more superficial, and unless we came to a stand, and got more sanctification in the church, we should defeat our object. We began to preach with that view, and the church members writhed under it. The preaching ran so directly across all their former notions, about the way to promote religion, that some of them were quite angry. They would run about, and talk, but would do nothing else. But after a terrible state of things many of them broke down, and became as humble and as teachable as little children.

Now there are multitudes in the churches who insist upon it that the way to get sanctification is to go to work, and they think that, by dint of mere friction, they can produce the warm love of God in their hearts. This is all wrong. Mere driving about and bustle and noise will never produce sanctification. And least of all, when persons have been accustomed to this course.

VI. You that are in the habit of performing many religious duties, and yet fall short of holiness, can see what is the matter.

The truth is, you have gone to *work* to wake up, instead of at once throwing yourself on the Lord Jesus Christ for sanctification, and then going to work to serve him. You have gone to work *for your life* instead of working *from* a principle of life within, impelling you to the work of the Lord. You have undertaken to get holiness by a lengthened process, like that of the convicted sinner, who is *preparing* to come to Christ. But the misfortune is, that you have not half the perseverance of the sinner. The sinner is driven by the fear of going to hell, and he exerts himself in the way of works till his strength is all exhausted, and all his self-righteousness is worked up, and then, feeling that he is helpless and undone, he throws himself into the arms of Christ. But you have not so much perseverance, because you have not so much fear. You think you are a Christian, and that however you may come short of sanctification, yet you are safe from hell, and can go to heaven without it. And so you will not persevere and put forth your efforts for holiness by works, till you have used up all your self-righteousness, and are driven to Christ

as your only hope for sanctification. This is the reason why convicted Christians so generally fall short of that submission to Christ for holiness, which the convicted sinner exercises for forgiveness.

You say to the sinner, who is seeking salvation by works, "Why don't you yield up all your self-righteous efforts, and come right to Christ for salvation? He is ready to receive you *now!*" And why don't *you* do so too? When will you learn the first lesson in religion, that *you* have no help in yourselves, and that all *your* exertions without Christ, for sanctification, are just as vain as it is for the wretch who is in the horrible pit of miry clay, by his own struggling to get himself out.

VII. The growth of works in the church is no certain sign of growth in holiness.

If the church grows in holiness, it will grow in works. But it does not follow, that growth in works always proves growth in holiness. It may be that works of religion may greatly increase, while the power of religion is actually and rapidly declining. It often happens in a church, that when a revival begins to lose its power, the church may be willing to do even more than ever, in works, but it will not arrest the decline, unless they get broken down before God.

I see I must take up this subject again. O, that I could convince the whole church that they need no other help but Christ, and that they would come at once to Christ for all they want, and receive him as their wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. How soon would all their wants be supplied, from his infinite fulness.

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## THE NECESSITY OF DIVINE TEACHING.

“ Nevertheless I tell you the truth—it is expedient for you that I go away—for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you—but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because they believe not on me—of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more—of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth—for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you things to come.”—JOHN xvi, 7-13.

THE doctrine of the necessity of Divine Influence, to enlighten and sanctify the minds of men, is very abundantly taught in the Bible, and is generally maintained, as a matter of opinion at least, in all orthodox churches. But, as a matter of fact, there seems to be very little available knowledge of the gospel among mankind; so little that it exerts comparatively little influence. The great ends of the gospel have hardly begun to be realised, in the production of holiness on the earth. It is a grand question, whether we do need Divine Influence to attain the ends of the gospel; and if we do need it, then in what degree do we need it, and why? If our minds are unsettled on this question, we shall be unsettled on all the subjects that practically concern our sanctification.

In discoursing on this subject to-night, I design to pursue the following order:

Inquire how far the reason of man, unaided by Divine Illumination, is capable of understanding the things of religion.

Show wherein the reason of man is defective, in regard to the capacity of gaining any available knowledge of the gospel.

That the Spirit of God alone can supply the Illumination that is needed.

That every one may have the influence of the Spirit, according to his necessities.

The reasons why any individual fails to receive this divine aid to the extent of his necessities.

That men are responsible for the light which they might have, as well as for that which they actually enjoy.

I. I shall inquire how far the reason of man, unaided by Divine Illumination, is capable of apprehending the things of religion.

The mind of man is capable of understanding the historical facts of religion ; just as it comprehends any other historical facts.

It is capable of understanding the doctrinal propositions of the gospel.

That is, it can understand those abstractions which make up the skeleton of the gospel ; such as the being and character of God, the divine authority and inspiration of the scriptures, and other fundamental doctrines which make up the framework of the gospel. That is, it can understand them as propositions, and see the evidence that supports them as true, just as it can any other propositions in science. For instance, to enter a little into the detail :

A man by his reason may understand the law of God. He can understand that it requires him to exercise perfect love, towards God and all other beings. He can see the ground of his obligation to do this, because he is a moral being. He knows by experience what love is, for he has exercised love towards different objects. And he can, therefore, form or comprehend the idea of love, so far as to see the reasonableness of the requirement. He can understand the foundation and the force of moral obligation, and see, in some measure, the extent of his obligation to love God.

So, likewise, he can see that he is a sinner, and that he cannot be saved by his own works. He has broken the law, so that the law can never justify him. He can see that, if he is ever saved, he must be justified through mere mercy, by an act of pardon.

I might go through the whole circle of theology, and show that the human understanding is capable of knowing it, in the abstract, as a system of propositions, to be received and believed, on evidence, like any other science. I do not mean to be understood, as saying that unaided reason can attain any *available* knowledge of the things of religion, or any such knowledge as will be effectual to produce a sanctifying change.

II. I am to show *wherein* our knowledge of the things of religion is necessarily defective, without the aids of the Holy Spirit.

In other words, I am to show what our knowledge of the gospel lacks, to make it available to salvation.

And here it is needful to distinguish between knowledge which *might be* available, to one that was himself *disposed* to love and obey God; and what will be available, in fact, to a *sinner*, who is wholly indisposed to holiness. It is easy to see, that one who is disposed to do right would be influenced to duty by a far less amount of illumination, or a far less clear and vivid view of motives, than one who is disposed to do wrong. What we are now inquiring after respects the matter of fact, in this world. Whether the knowledge attainable by our present faculties would be available to influence us to do right, were there no sin in the world, is more than I can say. As a matter of fact, the knowledge which Adam had when in a state of innocency *did not* avail to influence him to do right. But we are now speaking of things as they are in this world, and to show what is the reason that men, as *sinners*, can have no available knowledge of Divine things; no *such* knowledge as will, as a matter of fact, influence them to love and serve God.

Knowledge, to avail any thing towards effecting its object, must be such as will influence the mind. The *will* must be controlled. And to do this, the mind must have such a view of things as to excite *emotion*, corresponding to the object in view. Mere intellect never will move the soul to act. A pure scientific abstraction of the intellect, that does not touch the feelings, or excite any emotion, is wholly unavailable to move the will. It is so everywhere. It would be so in heaven. You must bring the mind under a degree of excitement, to influence the will in any case. And in the case of sinners, to influence sinners to love and obey God, you must have a great degree of light, such as will powerfully excite the mind, and produce strong emotions. The reasons for obedience must be made to appear with great strength and vividness, so as to subdue their rebellious hearts, and bring them voluntarily to obey God. This is available knowledge. This men never have, and never can have, without the Spirit of God. If men were disposed to do right, I know not how far their knowledge, attainable by unaided reason, might avail. But, as they are universally and totally in-

disposed, this knowledge will never do it. I will mention some of the reasons :

All the knowledge we can have here of spiritual things, is by analogy, or comparison.

Our minds are here shut up in the body, and derive all our ideas from external objects, through the senses. Now, we never can of ourselves obtain knowledge of spiritual or eternal things in this way sufficient to rightly influence our wills. Our bodily powers were not created for this. All the ideas we can have of the spiritual world is by analogy, or comparing them with the things around us. It is easily seen that all ideas conveyed to our minds in this way, must be extremely imperfect, and that we do not, after all, get the true idea in our minds. The Jewish types were probably the most forcible means which God could then use, for giving to the Jews a correct idea of the gospel. Considering how the eastern nations were accustomed, by their education, to the use of figures, and parables, and types, probably the system of types was the most impressive and happy mode that could be devised to gain a more ready access for the truth to their minds, and give them a more full idea of the plan of redemption than could be communicated in any other way. And yet it is manifest that the ideas which were communicated in this way were extremely imperfect ; and that, without Divine illumination to make them see the reality more fully than they could by unaided reason, they never would have got any available knowledge in this way.

So words are merely signs of *ideas*. They are not the ideas, but the representatives of ideas. It is often very difficult, and sometimes impossible to convey ideas by words. Take a little child, and attempt to talk with him, and how difficult it is, on many subjects, to get your ideas into his little mind. He must have some experience of the things you are trying to teach, before you can convey ideas to him by words.

Suppose this congregation were all blind, and had never seen colours. Then suppose that on that wall hung a most grand and beautiful painting, and that I was a perfect master of the subject, and should undertake to describe it to you. No language that I could use would give you such an idea of the painting, as to enable you to form a picture of it in your minds. Where, on any subject, we are obliged, from the nature of the case, to use figurative language, analogies and resemblances, the knowledge

we communicate is necessarily defective and inadequate. Who of you have not heard descriptions of persons and places, till you thought you had an accurate knowledge of them ; but when you come to see them you find you had no true idea of the reality ?

Suppose an individual were to visit this world from another planet, where all things are constituted on the most opposite principles from those which are adopted here. Suppose him to remain here long enough to learn our language, and that then he should undertake to give us a description of the world he had left. We should understand it according to our ideas and experience. Now, if the analogy between the two worlds is very imperfect, it is plain that our knowledge of things there, from his description, must be imperfect in proportion. So, when we find in the Bible descriptions of heaven or hell, or any thing in the invisible world, it is plain that from mere words we can get no true ideas at all adequate to the reality.

The *wickedness of our hearts* is so great, as to pervert our judgment, and shut out from our minds much that we might understand of the things of religion.

When a man's mind is so perverted on any subject, that he will not take up the evidence concerning it, he cannot, of course, come at the knowledge of the truth on that subject. This is our case in regard to religion. Perverseness of heart so shuts out the light, that the intellect does not, and from the nature of things *cannot*, get even the ideas it might otherwise gain, respecting divine things.

Prejudice is a great obstacle to the reception of correct knowledge concerning religion.

Take the case of the disciples of Christ. They had strong Jewish prejudices respecting the plan of salvation—so strong that all the instructions of Christ himself could not make them understand the truth. After teaching them personally, for three years, with all the talent, and simplicity, and skill he was master of, he could never get their minds in possession of the first principles of the gospel. Up to his very death, he could not make them see that he should die, and rise from the dead. Therefore he says in his last conversation—"If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." This was the very design of his going away from them, that the Spirit of Truth might come, and put

them in possession of *the things* which he meant by the words he had used in teaching them.

The general truth is this; that without divine illumination, men can understand from the Bible enough to convict and condemn them, but not enough to sanctify and save them.

Some may ask, What, then, is the use of revelation?

It is of much use. The Bible is as plain as it can be. Who doubts that our Lord Jesus Christ gave instructions to his disciples, as plainly as he could? See the pains which he took to illustrate his teaching; how simple his language; how he brings it down to the weakest comprehension, as a parent would to a little child. And yet it remains true, that without divine illumination, the unaided reason of man never did, and never will attain any available knowledge of the gospel. The difficulty lies in the subject. The Bible contains the gospel, as plain as it can be made. That is, it contains the signs of the ideas, as far as language can represent the things of religion. No language but figurative language can be used for this purpose. And this will for ever be inadequate to put our minds in real possession of the things themselves. The difficulty is in our ignorance and sin, and in the nature of the subject. This is the reason why we need divine illumination, to get any available knowledge of the gospel.

III. The Spirit of God alone can give us this illumination.

The Bible says, "No man can say that Jesus Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Now the abstract proposition of the Deity of Christ, can be proved, as a matter of science, so as to gain the assent of any unbiased mind to the truth, that Jesus Christ is Lord. But nothing short of the Holy Ghost can so put the mind in possession of the idea of Christ, as God, as to fix the soul in the belief of the fact, and make it available to sanctify the heart.

Again, it is said that "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Here it is evident that the drawing spoken of, is teaching by the Holy Spirit. They must be taught of God, and learn of the Father, before they can ever have such a knowledge of the things of religion as actually to come to Christ.



Christ says, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." The word, Παρακλητος, *Paracletos*, here translated Comforter, properly means a Helper or Teacher. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

So in the fourteenth chapter, the Saviour says, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the 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." And again, in the 26th verse, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Here you see that the office of the Spirit of God is, to instruct mankind in regard to the things of religion.

Now, it is manifest that *none but* the Spirit of God can supply this defect, from a single consideration—That all teaching by words, whether by Jesus Christ, or by apostles, or by any inspired or uninspired teacher, coming merely through the senses, can never put the mind in possession of the idea of spiritual things. The kind of teaching that we need is this; we want some one to teach us the things of religion, who is not obliged to depend on words, or to reach our minds through the medium of the senses. We want some way in which the *ideas themselves can* be brought to our minds, and not merely the signs of the ideas. We want a teacher who can directly approach the mind itself, and not through the senses; and who can exhibit the ideas of religion, without being obliged to use words. This the Spirit of God can do.

*The manner* in which the Spirit of God does this, is what we can never know in this world. But the fact is undeniable, that he can reach the mind without the use of words, and can

put our minds in possession of the ideas themselves, of which the types, or figures, or words, of the human teacher, are only the signs or imperfect representatives. The human teacher can only use words to our senses, and finds it impossible to possess us of the ideas of that which we have never experienced. But the Spirit of God, having direct access to the mind, can, through the outward sign, possess us of the actual idea of things. What Christian does not know this, as a matter of fact? What Christian does not know, from his own experience, that the Spirit of God does lead him instantly to see that in a passage of scripture, which all his study, and effort of mind to know the meaning of could never have given him in the world?

Take the case again, of a painting on the wall there, and suppose that all the congregation were blind, and I was trying to describe to them this painting. Now suppose, while I was labouring to make them understand the various distinctions and combinations of colours, and they are bending their minds to understand it, all at once their eyes are opened! You can then see for yourselves the very things which I was vainly trying to bring to your minds by words. Now, the office of the Spirit of God, and what he alone can do, is to open the spiritual eye, and bring the things which we try to describe by analogy and signs, in all their living reality, before the mind, so as to put the mind in complete possession of the thing as it is.

It is evident, too, that no one but the Spirit of God so knows the things of God as to be able to give us the idea of those things correctly. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him?" What can a beast know of the things of a man, of a man's character, designs, &c.? I can speak to your consciousness—being a man, and knowing the things of a man. But I cannot speak these things to the consciousness of a beast, neither can a beast speak of these things, because he has not the spirit of man in him, and cannot know them. In like manner, the Bible says, "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." The Spirit of God, knowing from consciousness the things of God, possesses a different kind of knowledge of these things from what other beings can possess; and therefore, can give us the kind of instruction that we need, and such as no other being can give.

IV. The needed influences of the Spirit of God may be possessed by all men, freely, under the gospel.

A few passages from the Bible will show this :

Jesus Christ says God is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than parents are to give their children bread. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." "And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." "Therefore, I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; *and it shall be given him.*" If it be true, that God has made these unlimited promises, that *all men*, who will ask of him, may have divine illumination as much as they will ask for, then it is true that all men may have as much of divine illumination as they need.

V. I will show the reasons why any do not have as much divine illumination as they need.

They do not ask for it in any such manner or degree as they need it.

They ask amiss, or from selfish motives.

The apostle James says, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it on your lusts." When an individual has a selfish motive for asking, or some other reason than a desire to glorify God, he need not expect to receive divine illumination. If his object in asking for the Holy Ghost is that he may always be happy in religion, or that he may be very wise in the scriptures, or be looked upon as an eminent Christian, or have his experience spoken of as remarkable, or any other selfish view, that is a good reason why he should not receive even what he asks.

They do not use the proper means to attain what they ask.

Suppose a person neglects his Bible, and yet asks God to give him a knowledge of the things of religion. That is tempting God. The manner in which God gives knowledge is through the Bible, and preaching, and the other appointed means of instruction. If a person will not use these means, when they are in his power, how ever much he may pray, he need not expect divine instruction. "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."

There is an important difference to be observed, between the cases of those who possess these means, and those who do not. I suppose that a person may learn the gospel, and receive all the illumination he needs, under any circumstances of privation of means. As if he was on a desolate island, he might receive direct illumination from the Spirit of God. And so he might, in any other circumstances, where he absolutely *could not* have access to any means of instruction. Some very remarkable cases of this kind have occurred within a few years. I have known one case, which I looked upon at the time as miraculous, and for that reason have seldom mentioned it, feeling that even the church was not prepared to receive it. When I was an evangelist, I laboured once in a revival, in a neighborhood where there were many Germans. They had received but little instruction, and many of them could not read. But when the gospel was preached among them, the Spirit of God was poured out, and a most powerful revival followed. In the midst of the harvest, if a meeting was appointed at any place, the whole neighbourhood would come together, and fill the house, and hang upon the preacher's lips, while he tried to possess their minds with the truths of the gospel. One poor German woman, naturally intelligent, but who could not read, in relating her experience in one of these meetings, told this fact which was certified to by her neighbours. With many tears and a heart full of joy, she said, "When I loved God, I longed to read the Bible, and I prayed to Jesus Christ, I said and felt, O Jesus! thou canst teach me to read thy holy bible, and the Lord taught me to read. There was a Bible in the house, and when I had prayed, I thought I could read the Bible, and I got the book, and opened it, and the words were just what I had heard people read. I said, 'O Lord Jesus Christ, thou *canst* teach me to read,' and I believed he could, and I thought I did read, but I went and asked the school-madam if I read, and she said I read it right, and the Lord has taught me to read my Bible, blessed be his name for it." I do not know but the school-madam to whom she referred was in the house and heard her relation. At all events, she was a woman of good character among her neighbours, and some of the most respectable of them afterwards told me they did not doubt the truth of what she said. I have no doubt it was true.

At the time, I thought it was a miracle; but since the facts

which have been developed within a few years, respecting the indestructibility of the memory, I have thought this case might be explained in that way ; and that she had probably been told the names of the letters and their powers when young, and now the Spirit of God, in answer to her prayer, had quickened her mind, and brought it all to her remembrance, so that she could read the Bible.

Some of you will recollect the facts which were stated here, one evening, by President Mahan, which show that every impression which is made on the mind of man remains there for ever indelible. One case that he mentioned was that of an old lady, who when she was young had read some lines of poetry, relating a little story ; and afterwards, when old, she wished to tell the story to some children, to whom she thought it would be useful, and to her surprise the whole of the lines came up fresh in her memory, and she repeated them *verbatim*, although she never had committed them to memory at all, but only read them when she was young. Another was the case of an ignorant servant girl. She had once lived with a learned minister, who was accustomed to read aloud the Hebrew Bible, in his study, which was in hearing of the place where this girl did her work. Of course she understood nothing of the words, but only heard the sounds. Long afterwards when she was on her death-bed, she astonished the bystanders by reciting whole chapters of Hebrew and Chaldaic. The neighbours at first thought it was a miracle, but at length learned the explanation. It is plain from this, that even unintelligible sound may be so impressed on the memory, as afterwards to recur with entire distinctness. I suppose that was probably the case with this poor German woman, and that the Spirit of God, in answer to her fervent prayer, so refreshed her memory as to recall the sounds and forms of letters she had been told when a child, and thus enable her at once to read the Bible.

I say, therefore, that while those who do not possess any outward means of instruction may obtain directly from the Spirit of God whatever degree or kind of illumination they need in the things of religion ; those who possess or can obtain the outward means, and do not use them, tempt God, when they pray for Divine illumination and neglect the use of means for obtaining knowledge. To those who have the opportunity, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." If any man

keeps away from the means within his reach, he can expect illumination in no other way. Whereas, if he is shut out from the use of means, as God is true to his promises, we must believe that he can be illuminated without means to any extent that he needs.

Another reason why many do not receive that illumination from the Spirit of God which they need is because they *grieve the Spirit* in many ways.

They live in such a manner as to grieve or offend the Holy Spirit, so that he cannot consistently grant them his illuminating grace.

Another reason is, that they *depend on instructions and means*, as available without Divine influence.

How many rely on the instructions they receive from ministers, or commentaries, or books, or their own powers of inquiry; not feeling that all these things, without the spirit of God, will only kill, but can never make alive—can only damn, but never save. It seems as though the whole church was in error on this point; depending on means for Divine knowledge, without feeling that *no means* are available, without the Spirit of God. O! if the church felt this—if they really felt that all the means in creation are unavailing without the teaching of the Holy Ghost, how they would pray, and cleanse their hands, and humble their hearts, until the Comforter would descend to teach them all things that they need to know of religion.

*Self-confidence* is another reason why so little is experienced of Divine illumination.

So long as professing Christians place confidence in learning, or criticism, or their natural ingenuity, to learn the things of religion, rely on it they are not likely to enjoy much of the illumination of the Spirit of God.

VI. I am to show that men are responsible for what they might have of Divine illumination.

This is a universal truth, and is acknowledged by all mankind, that a man is just as responsible for what light he might have, as for that which he actually has. The common law, which is the voice of common reason, adopts it as a maxim that no man who breaks the law is to be excused for ignorance of the law, because all are held bound to know what the law is. So it is with your children, in a case where they might know your will, you consider them so much the more blameworthy,

if they offend. So it is in religion ; where men have both the outward means of instruction, and the inward teachings of the Holy Spirit absolutely within their reach, if they sin in ignorance, they are not only without excuse on that score, but their ignorance is itself a crime, and is an aggravation of their guilt. And all men are plainly without excuse for not possessing all the knowledge which would be available for their perfect and immediate sanctification.

#### REMARKS.

I. You see what is the effect of all other instructions on a congregation where no Divine influence is enjoyed.

It may convince the church of duty, but will never produce sanctification. It may harden the heart, but will never change it. Without divine influence, it is but a savour of death unto death.

II. You see that it is important to use all the appropriate means of religious instruction in our power, as the medium through which the Spirit of God conveys Divine illumination to the mind.

There is no reason why we should not use the means in our power, and apply our natural faculties to acquire knowledge of religion, as faithfully as if we could understand the whole subject without Divine influence. And if we do not use means, when within our power, we have no reason to expect Divine aid. When we help ourselves, God helps us. When we use our natural faculties to understand these things, we may expect God will enlighten us. To turn our eyes away from the light, and then pray that we may be made to see, is to tempt God.

III. They are blind leaders of the blind, who attempt to teach the things of religion without being themselves taught of God.

No degree of learning, or power of discrimination as to the didactics of theology, will ever make a man a successful teacher of religion, unless he enjoys the illuminating powers of the Holy Ghost. He is blind if he supposes he understands the Bible without this, and if he undertakes to teach religion, he deceives himself, and all who depend on him, and both will fall into the ditch together.

IV. If an individual teaches the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, he will be understood.

He may understand the gospel himself, and yet not make his hearers understand it, because the Holy Ghost is not sent on them as well as himself. But if the Spirit of God is on them, precisely in proportion as he himself understands the real meaning of the gospel, he will make his hearers understand it.

V. In preaching the gospel, ministers should never use texts, the meaning of which they have not been taught by the Spirit of God.

They should not attempt to explain passages of which they are not confident they have been taught the meaning by the Holy Spirit. It is presumption. And they need not do it, for they may always have the teachings of the Spirit, by asking. God is more ready to bestow divine illumination than an earthly parent is to give bread to his child ; and if they ask, as a child, when he is hungry, asks his mother for a piece of bread, they may always receive all the light they need. This is applicable both to preachers and to teachers in Sabbath schools and Bible classes. If any of them attempt to teach the Scriptures without being themselves taught, they are no more fit to teach without divine teaching, than the most ignorant person in the streets is fit to teach astronomy. I fear both ministers and teachers generally have understood very little of their *need* of this divine teaching, and have felt very little of the necessity of praying over their sermons and bible lessons, till they felt confident that the Spirit of God has possessed their minds with the true idea of the word of God. If this was done as it ought to be, their instructions would be far more effectual than we now see them. Do you, who are teachers of Bible and Sabbath school classes in this church, believe this? Are you in the habit, conscientiously and uniformly, of seeking the true idea of every lesson on your knees? Or do you go to some commentary and then come and peddle out your dry stuff to your classes, that you get out of commentaries and books, without any of the Holy Ghost in your teaching? If you do this, let me tell you, that you had better be doing something else. What would you say of a minister, if you knew he never prayed over his texts? You might as well have Balaam's ass for a minister, and even the dumb beast in such a case might speak with man's voice and rebuke the madness of such a man. He could give just as much available instruction to reach the deep fountains of the heart,



as such a preacher. Well, now, this is just as important for a Sunday school teacher as for a minister. If you do not pray over your lesson, until you feel that God has taught you the idea contained in it, *beware!* How dare you go and teach that for religion, which you do not honestly suppose you have been taught of God?

VI. It is a vast error in theological students, when they study to get the views of all the great teachers, the tomes of the fathers and doctors, and everybody's opinion as to what the Bible means, *but the opinion of the Holy Ghost.*

With hearts as cold as marble, instead of going right to the source of light, they go and gather up the husks of learning, and peddle it out among the churches as religious instruction. Horrible! While they do thus, we never shall have an efficient ministry. It is right they should get all the help they can from learning, to understand the word of God. But they ought never to rest in any thing they get from book learning, until they are satisfied that God has put them in possession of the very idea which *he* would have them receive.

I have tried hard to make this impression, and I believe I have succeeded in some degree, on the theological students under my care. And if I had done it more, I have no doubt I might have succeeded better. And I can say, that when I studied theology, I spent many hours on my knees, and perhaps I might say weeks, often with the Bible before me, labouring and praying to come at the very mind of the Spirit. I do not say this boastingly, but as a matter of fact, to show that the sentiment here advanced is no novel opinion with me. And I have always got my texts and sermons on my knees. And yet I am conscious that I have gained very little knowledge in religion, compared with what I might have had, if I had taken right hold of the source of light, as I ought to have done.

VII. How little knowledge have the great body of the church, respecting the word of God!

Put them, for instance, to read the epistles, and other parts, and probably they will not have knowledge enough to give an opinion as to the real meaning of one-tenth of the Bible. No wonder the church is not sanctified! They need *more truth*. Our Saviour says, "Sanctify them *through thy truth*." This grand means of sanctification must be more richly enjoyed before the church will know what entire sanctification means.

The church do not understand the Bible. And the reason is, *they have not gone to the author* to explain it. Although they have this blessed privilege every day, and just as often as they choose, of carrying the book right to the Author for his explanation, yet how little, how very little, do the church know of the Bible, which they are conscious they have been taught to know by the Holy Ghost! Read the text again, read other similar passages, and then say if Christians are not exceedingly to blame for not understanding the Bible.

VIII. You see the necessity that we should all give ourselves up to the study of the Bible, under divine teaching.

I have recently recommended several books to you to read, such as Wesley's Thoughts on Christian Perfection, the Memoirs of Brainerd Taylor, Payson, Mrs. Rogers, and others. I have found that, in a certain state of mind, such books are useful to read. But I never pretend to make but *one book* my study. I read them occasionally, but have little time or inclination to read other books much while I have so much to learn of my Bible. I find it like a deep mine, the more I work it, the richer it grows. We must read that more than any or all other books. We must pause and pray over it, verse by verse, and compare part with part, dwell on it, digest it, and get it into our minds, till we feel that the Spirit of God has filled us with the spirit of holiness.

Will you do it? Will you lay your hearts open to God, and not give him rest, till he has filled you with divine knowledge? Will you *search* the scriptures? I have often been asked by young converts, and young men preparing for the ministry, what they should read. *Read the Bible.* I would give the same answer five hundred times, over and above all other things, study the Bible. It is a sad fact, that most young men, when they enter the ministry often know less of the Bible than of any other book they study. Alas! alas! O, if they had the spirit of James Brainerd Taylor, his love for the scriptures, his prayer for divine teaching, we should no longer hear the groans of the churches over the barrenness of so many young preachers, who come out of our seminaries full of book learning, and almost destitute of the Holy Ghost.

## LOVE, THE WHOLE OF RELIGION.

“Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”—ROMANS, xiii, 10.

**I**N speaking from these words, I design, to make some remarks on the nature of love.—To show that love is the whole of religion.—Some things that are not essential to perfect love.—Some things that are essential.—Some of the effects of perfect love.

I. I am to make some remarks on the nature of love.

The first remark I have to make is, that there are various forms under which love may exist.

The two principal forms, so far as religion is concerned, are benevolence and complacency. Benevolence is an *affection of* the mind, or an act of the will. It is willing good, or a desire to promote the happiness of its object. Complacency is esteem, or approbation of the character of its object. Benevolence should be exercised towards all beings, irrespective of their moral character. Complacency is due only to the good and holy.

Love may exist either as an affection or as an emotion.

When love is an affection, it is voluntary, or consists in the act of the will. When it is an emotion, it is involuntary. What we call feelings, or emotions, are involuntary. They are not directly dependent on the will, or controlled by a direct act of will. The virtue of love is mostly when it is in the form of an affection. The happiness of love is mostly when it is in the form of an emotion. If the affection of love be very strong, it produces a high degree of happiness, but the emotion of holy love is happiness itself.

I said that the emotion of love is involuntary. I do not mean that the will has nothing to do with it, but that it is not the result of a mere or direct act of the will. No man can exercise the emotion of love by merely willing it. And the emotion may often exist in spite of the will. Individuals often feel emotions

rising in their minds, which they know to be improper, and try by direct efforts of will to banish them from their minds; and finding that impossible, therefore conclude that they have no control of these emotions. But they may always be controlled by the will in an indirect way. The mind can bring up any class of emotions it chooses, by directing the attention sufficiently to the proper object. They will be certain to rise in proportion as the attention is fixed, provided the will is right in regard to the object of attention. So of those emotions which are improper or disagreeable; the mind may be rid of them, by turning the attention entirely away from the object, and not suffering the thoughts to dwell on it.

Ordinarily, the *emotions* of love towards God are experienced when we exercise love towards him in the form of *affection*.

But this is not always the case. We may exercise goodwill towards any object, and yet at times feel no sensible emotions of love. It is not certain that even the Lord Jesus Christ exercised love towards God, in the form of emotion, at all times. So far as our acquaintance with the nature of the mind goes, we know that a person may exercise affection, and be guided and be governed by it, constantly, in all his actions, without any felt emotion of love towards its object at the time. Thus a husband and father may be engaged in labouring for the benefit of his family, and his very life controlled by affection for them, while his thoughts are not so engaged upon them as to make him feel any sensible emotions of love to them at the time. The things about which he is engaged may take up his mind so much, that he has scarcely a thought of them, and so he may have no felt emotion towards them, and yet he is all the time guided and governed by affection for them. Observe, here, that I use the term *affection*, in the sense of President Edwards, as explained by him in his celebrated Treatise on the Will. An *affection*, in his treatise, is an act of the will or a volition.

Love to our neighbour naturally implies the existence of love to God, and love to God naturally implies love to our neighbour.

The same is declared in the 8th verse, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely,

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Here it is taken for granted that love to our neighbour implies the existence of love to God, otherwise it could not be said that "he that loveth *another* hath fulfilled the law." The apostle James recognises the same principle, when he says, "If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well." Here love to our neighbour is spoken of as constituting obedience to the whole law. Benevolence, that is, good will to our neighbour, naturally implies love to God. It is love to the happiness of being. So the love of complacency towards holy beings naturally implies love to God, as a being of infinite holiness.

II. I am to show that love is the whole of religion.

In other words, all that is required of man by God consists in love, in various modifications and results. Love is the sum total of all.

The first proof I shall offer is, that the sentiment is taught in the text, and many other passages of scripture.

The scriptures fully teach, that love is the sum total of all the requirements, both of the law and gospel. Our Saviour declares that the great command, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind and strength, and thy neighbour as thyself, is the sum total of all the law and the prophets, or implies and includes all that the whole scriptures, the law and the gospel require.

God is love, and to love is to be like God, and to be perfect in love is to be perfect as God is perfect.

All God's moral attributes consist in love, acting under certain circumstances and for certain ends. God's justice in punishing the wicked, his anger at sin, and the like, are only exercises of his love to the general happiness of his kingdom. So it is in man. All that is good in man is some modification of love. Hatred to sin, is only love to virtue acting itself out in opposing whatever is opposed to virtue. So true faith implies and includes love, and faith which has no love in it, or that does not work by love, is no part of religion. The faith that belongs to religion is an affectionate confidence in God. There is a kind of faith in God, which has no love in it. The devil has that kind of faith. The convicted sinner has it. But there is no religion in it. Faith might rise even to the faith of miracles, and yet if there is no love in it, it amounts to nothing. The apostle Paul, in the 13th chap-

ter of I Corinthians, says, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

Just so it is with repentance. The repentance that does not include love is not "repentance *towards* God." True repentance implies obedience to the law of love, and consequent opposition to sin.

III. I will mention some things that are not essential to perfect love.

The *highest degree of emotion* is not essential to perfect love.

It is manifest that the Lord Jesus Christ very seldom had the highest degree of emotion of love, and yet he always had perfect love. He generally manifested very little emotion, or excitement. Excitement is always proportioned to the strength of the emotions as it consists in them. The Saviour seemed generally remarkably calm. Sometimes his indignation was strong, or his grief for the hardness of men's hearts; and sometimes we read that he rejoiced in spirit. But he was commonly calm, and manifested no high degree of emotion. And it is plainly not essential to perfect love, that the *emotion* of love should exist in a high degree.

Perfect love does not exclude the idea of increase in love, or growth in grace.

I suppose the growth of the mind in knowledge, to all eternity, naturally implies growth in love to all eternity. The Lord Jesus Christ, in his human nature, grew in stature, and in favour with God and man. Doubtless, as a child, he grew in knowledge, and as he grew in knowledge, he grew in love *towards* God, as well as in favour *with* God. His love was perfect when he was a child, but it was greater when he became a man. As a human being, he probably always continued to increase in love to God, as long as he lived. From the nature of mind, we see that it may be so with all the saints in glory, that their love will increase to all eternity, and yet it is always perfect love.

It is not essential to perfect love, that love should always be exercised towards all individuals alike.

We cannot think of all individuals at once. You cannot even think of every individual of your acquaintance at once. The degree of love towards an individual depends on the fact that the individual is present to the thoughts.

It is not essential to perfect love, that there should be the same degree of the spirit of prayer for every individual, or for the same individual at all times.

The spirit of prayer is not always essential to pure and perfect love. The saints in heaven have pure and perfect love for all beings, and yet we know not that they have the spirit of prayer for any. You may love any individual with a very strong degree of love, and yet not have the spirit of prayer for that individual. That is, the Spirit of God may not lead you to pray for the salvation of that individual. You do not pray for the wicked in hell. The spirit of prayer depends on the influences of the Holy Ghost, leading the mind to pray for things agreeable to the will of God. You cannot pray in the Spirit, with the same degree of fervour and faith for all mankind. Jesus Christ said expressly, he did not pray for all mankind: "I pray not for the world." Here has been a great mistake in regard to the spirit of prayer. Some suppose that Christians have not done all their duty, if they have not prayed in faith for every individual, as long as there is a sinner on earth. Then Jesus Christ never did all his duty, for he never did this. God has never told us he will save all mankind and never gave us any reason to believe he will do it. How then can we pray in faith for the salvation of all? What has that faith to rest on?

Perfect love is not inconsistent with those feelings of languor or constitutional debility, which are the necessary consequence of exhaustion or ill health.

We are so constituted, that excitement naturally and necessarily exhausts our powers. But love may be perfect, notwithstanding. Though one may feel more like lying down and sleeping, than he does like praying, yet his love may be perfect. The Lord Jesus Christ often felt this weariness and exhaustion, when the spirit was still willing, but the flesh was weak.

IV. What is essential to perfect love.

It implies that there is nothing in the mind inconsistent with love.

No malice, hatred, wrath, envy, or any other malignant emotions that are inconsistent with pure and perfect love.

That there is nothing in the life inconsistent with love.

All the actions, words, and thoughts continually under the entire and perfect control of love.

That the love to God is supreme.

The love to God is completely supreme, and so entirely above all other objects, that nothing else is loved in comparison with God.

That love to God is disinterested.

God is loved for what he is ; not for his relation to us, but for the excellence of his character.

That love to our neighbour should be equal, *i.e.*, that his interest and happiness should be regarded by us as of equal value with our own, and he and his interests are to be treated accordingly by us.

V. I am to mention some of the effects of perfect love.

One effect of perfect love to God and man will certainly be delight in self-denial for the sake of promoting the interests of God's kingdom, and the salvation of sinners.

See affectionate parents, how they delight in self-denial for the sake of promoting the happiness of their children. There is a father ; he gives himself up to exhausting labour, day by day, and from year to year, through the whole of a long life, rising early, and eating the bread of carefulness continually, to promote the welfare of his family. And he counts all this self-denial and toil not a grief or a burden, but a delight, because of the love he bears to his family. See that mother ; she wishes to educate her son at college. And now, instead of finding it painful it is a joy to her to sit up late and labour incessantly to help him. That is because she really loves her son. Such parents rejoice more in conferring gifts on their children, than they would in enjoying the same things themselves. What parent does not enjoy a piece of fruit more in giving it to his little child, than in eating it himself ? The Lord Jesus Christ enjoyed more solid satisfaction in working out salvation for mankind, than any of his saints can ever enjoy in receiving favours at his hands. He testified that it is more blessed to give than to receive. This was the joy set before him for which he endured the cross and despised the shame. His love was so great for mankind, that it constrained him to undertake this work, and sustained him triumphantly through it. The apostle Paul did not count it a grief and a hardship to be hunted from place to place, imprisoned, scourged, stoned, and counted the offscouring of all things, for the sake of spreading the gospel and saving souls. It was his joy. The love of Christ so constrained him, he had such a desire to do good, that it was his highest delight to lay himself on that altar as a



sacrifice to the cause. Other individuals have had the same mind with the apostle. They have been known who would be willing to live a thousand years, or to the end of time, if they could be employed in doing good, in promoting the kingdom of God, and saving the souls of men, and willing to forego even sleep and food to benefit objects they so greatly love.

It delivers the soul from the power of legal motives.

Perfect love leads a person to obey God, not because he fears the wrath of God, or hopes to be rewarded for doing this or that, but because he loves God and loves to do the will of God. There are two extremes on this subject. One class make virtue to consist in doing right, simply because it is right, without any reference to the will of God, or any influence from love to God. Another class make virtue to consist in acting from love to the employment, but without reference to God's authority, as a Ruler and Law-giver. Both of these are in error. To do a thing simply because he thinks it right, and not out of love to God is not virtue. Neither is it virtue to do a thing because he loves to do it, with no regard to God's will. A woman might do certain things *because* she knew it would please her husband, but if she did the same thing merely because she loved to do it, and with no regard to her husband, it would be no virtue as it respects her husband. If a person loves God, as soon as he knows what is God's will, he will do it *because it is* God's will. Perfect love will lead to universal obedience, to do God's will in all things, because it is the will of God.

The individual who exercises perfect love will be dead to the world.

I mean by this, that he will be cut loose from the influence of worldly considerations. Perfect love will so annihilate selfishness, that he will have no will but the will of God, and no interest but God's glory. He will not be influenced by public sentiment, or what this or that man will say or think. See that woman, what she will do from natural affection to her husband. She is willing to cut loose from all her friends, as much as if she was dead to them, and not pay the least regard to what they say, and leave all the riches, and honours, and delights they can offer, to join the individual whom she loves, and live with him in poverty, in disgrace, and in exile. Her affection is so great, that she does it joyfully, and is ready to go from a palace, to any cottage or cave in earth, and be perfectly happy. And all that her friends can

say against the man of her affection has not the least influence on her mind, only to make her cling the more closely to him. This one *all-absorbing* affection has actually killed all the influences that used to act on her. To attempt to influence her by such things is in vain. There is only one avenue of approach to her mind ; only one class of motives move her, and that is through the object of her affection.

So far as the philosophy of mind is concerned, the perfect love of God operates in the same way. The mind that is filled with perfect love, it is impossible to divert from God, while love continues in exercise. Take away his worldly possessions, his friends, his good name, his children, send him to prison, beat him with stripes, bind him to the stake, fill his flesh full of pine knots and set them on fire ; and then leave him his God, and he is happy. His strong affection can make him insensible to all things else. He is as if he were dead to all the world but his God. Cases have been known of martyrs who, while their bodies were frying at the stake, were so perfectly happy in God, as to lose the sense of pain. Put such a one in hell, in the lake of fire and brimstone, and as long as he enjoys God, and the love of God fills his soul, he is happy.

Who has not witnessed or heard of cases of affection, approaching in degree to what I have described, where a person is in fact dead to all other things, and lives only for the loved object. How often do you see fond parents, who live for an only child, and when that child dies, wish themselves dead. Sometimes a husband and wife have such an absorbing affection for each other, that they live for nothing else ; and if the husband dies, the wife pines away and dies also. The soul-absorbing object for which she lived is gone, and why should she live any longer ? So, when an individual is filled with the perfect love of God, he wishes to live only to love and serve God ; he is dead to the world, dead to his own reputation, and has no desire to live for any other reason, here, or in heaven, or any where else in the universe, but to glorify God. He is willing to live, here or anywhere else, and suffer and labour a thousand years, or to all eternity, if it will glorify God.

I recollect hearing a friend say, often, "I don't know that I have one thought of living a single moment for any other purpose than to glorify God, any more than I should think of leaping right into hell." This was said soberly and deliberately, and

the whole life of that individual corresponded with the declaration. He was intelligent, sober-minded, and honest, and I have no doubt expressed what had been the fullest conviction of his mind for years. What was this but perfect love? What more does any angel in heaven do than this? His love may be greater in degree, because his strength is greater. But the highest angel could not love more perfectly than to be able to say in sincerity, "I should as soon think of leaping into hell, as of living one moment for any other object but to glorify God." What could Jesus Christ himself say more than that?

It is hardly necessary to say that perfect joy and peace are the natural results of perfect love.

But I wish to turn your attention here to what the apostle says in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians, speaking of charity, or love. You will observe that the word here translated *charity* is the same that is in other places rendered *love*. It means love. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." He might have even the faith of miracles, so strong that he could move mountains from their everlasting foundations, and yet have no love. "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." You see how far he supposes a man may go without love. "Charity suffereth long." Long-suffering is meekness under opposition or injury. This is one of the effects of love, to bear great provocations, and not retaliate or revile again. Love "is kind," or affectionate in all intercourse with others, never harsh or rude, or needlessly giving pain to any. Love "envieth not," never dislikes others because they are more thought of or noticed, more honoured or useful, or make greater attainments in knowledge, happiness or piety. "Is not puffed up" with pride, but always humble and modest. "Doth not behave itself unseemly," but naturally begets a pleasant and courteous deportment towards all. However unacquainted the individual may be with the ways of society, who is actuated by perfect love, he always appears well, it is natural to him to be so kind and gentle and

courteous. "Seeketh not her own," or has no selfishness. "Is not easily provoked." This is always the effect of love. See that mother, how long she bears with her children, because she loves them. If you see an individual that is testy, or crusty, easily flying into a passion when anything goes wrong—he is by no means perfect in love, if he has any love. To be easily provoked is always a sign of pride. If a person is full of love, it is impossible to make him exercise *sinful* anger while love continues. He exercises such indignation as God exercises, and as holy angels feel, at what is base and wrong, but he will not be provoked by it. "Thinketh no evil." Show me a man that is always suspicious of the motives of others, and for ever putting the worst construction on the words and actions of his fellow men, and I will show you one who has the devil in him, not the Holy Ghost. He has that in his own mind which makes him think evil of others. If an individual is honest and simple-hearted himself, he will be the last to think evil of others. He will not be always smelling heresy or mischief in others. On the contrary, such persons are often liable to be imposed on by designing men, not from any want of good sense, but from the effect of love. They do not suspect evil, where the exterior appears fair, nor without the strongest proof.

Love "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." See a man who exults at his neighbour's fall, or cries out, "I told you so;" and I tell you, that man is far enough from being perfect in love. "Beareth all things," all provocations and injuries, without revenge. "Believeth all things," instead of being hard to be convinced of what is in favour of others, is always ready to believe good wherever there is the least evidence of it. "Hopeth all things;" even where there is reason to suspect evil, as long as there is room for hope, by putting the best construction upon the thing which it will bear. Where you see an individual that has not this spirit, rest assured he is by no means perfect in love. Nay, he has no love at all.

I might pursue this course of thought farther, but have not time. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." Mark that, *no ill!* Perfect love never overreaches, nor defrauds, nor oppresses, nor does any ill to a neighbour. Would a man under the influence of perfect love, sell his neighbour rum? Never. Would a man that loved God with all his heart, perfectly, hold his neighbour as a slave? "Love worketh *no ill* to his neighbour."

Slavery denies him the wages that he has earned, and perhaps sells him, and tears him away from his family, deprives him of the Bible, and endeavours as far as possible to make him a brute. There cannot be greater falsehood and hypocrisy, than for a man who will do that, to pretend that he loves God, now that light is shed upon this subject, and the attention of men turned upon it. Will a man hate his own flesh? How can he love God that hates or injures his neighbour?

I designed to remark on one other effect of perfect love. It uniformly shows itself in great efforts for the sanctification of the church and the salvation of souls. Where a person is negligent or deficient in either of these, he is by no means perfect in love, whatever may be his pretensions.

#### REMARKS.

I. You see why it is true, what the apostle James says, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain."

The man that professes to be religious, and yet allows himself to speak against his neighbour with an unbridled tongue, to injure his neighbour, deceives himself, if he thinks he loves his neighbour as himself. Strange love!

II. There may be much light in the mind, concerning religion, without love.

You often see individuals, who understand a great deal, intellectually, about religion, and can spread it out before others, while it is plain they are not actuated by the spirit of love. They have not the law of kindness on their lips.

III. Those individuals who have much religious knowledge and zeal, without love, are most unlovely and dangerous persons.

They are always censorious, proud, heady, high-minded. They may make a strong impression, but do not produce true religion. They zealously affect you, but not well.

IV. The drift of a man's zeal will determine the character of his religion.

It will show whether the light in his mind is accompanied with love. If it is, his zeal will not be sectarian in its character. Show me a man full of jealousy towards all that do not belong to his sect or party, and there is a man far enough from perfect love.

True love is never denunciatory or harsh. If it has occasion to speak of the faults of others, it does it in kindness, and with sorrow. Perfect love *cannot* speak in a rough or abusive manner, either to or of others. It will not lay great stress on the mere circumstantials of religion, nor be sticklish for particular measures or forms. Many will contend fiercely either for or against certain things, as for or against new measures; but if they were full of love they would not do it. The zeal that is governed by perfect love will not spend itself in contending for or against any forms in religion, nor attack minor errors and evils. Love leads to laying stress on the fundamentals in religion. It cleaves to warm-hearted Christians, no matter of what denomination they may be, and loves them, and delights to associate with them.

This zeal is never disputatious, or full of controversy. Find a man who loves to attend ecclesiastical meetings, and enters into all the janglings of the day, and that man is not full of love. To a mind filled with holy love, it is exceedingly painful to go to such meetings, and see ministers dividing into parties, and manœuvring, and caucussing, and pettifogging, and striving for the mastery. Find an individual who loves controversy in the newspapers, he is not full of love. If he was, he would rather be abused, and reviled, and slandered, either in person or by the papers, than turn aside to defend himself or to reply. He would never return railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. And as much as possible, he would live peaceably with all men.

V. How much that is called religion, has no love.

How much of what passes for works of religion, is constrained by outward causes and influences, and not by the inward power of love. It ought to be better understood than it is, that unless love is the mainspring, no matter what the outward action may be, whether praying, praising, giving, or any thing else, there is no religion in it. How much excitement that passes for religion, has no love. How much zeal has no religion in it. See that man, always full of bitter zeal, and if reproved for it, flying to the example of Paul, when he said, "Thou child of the Devil." If he was under the influence of perfect love, he would see that his circumstances are so different as not to justify the exercise of such a spirit.

VI. Those religious excitements which do not consist in the spirit of love, are not revivals of religion.

Perhaps the church may be much excited, and bustle about with a great show of zeal, and boisterous noise, but no tenderness of spirit. Perhaps those who go about may show a spirit of insolence, and rudeness, and pick a quarrel with every family they visit. I once knew a young man who acknowledged that he *aimed* at making people angry, and the reason he assigned was, that it often brought them under conviction, and so issued in conversion. And so it might if he should go in and utter horrid blasphemies in their presence, until they were frightened into a consideration of their own character. But who would defend such conduct on the ground that such was now and then the result? And if this is the character of the excitement, it may be a revival of wrath, and malice, and all uncharitableness, but it is not a revival of religion. I do not mean that when some or many are "filled with wrath," it is certain evidence that there is no revival of religion. But that when the excitement has this prevailing character, it is not a true revival of religion. Some among them may have the spirit of love, but certainly those who are filled with a bitter disputatious zeal are not truly religious. Religion may be in some individuals revived, but in the main, in such cases, it is a revival of irreligion.

VII. When persons profess to be converted, if love is not the ruling feature in their character, they are not truly converted.

However well they may appear in other respects, no matter how clear their views or how deep their feelings, if they have not the spirit of love to God, and love to man, they are deceived. Let no such converts be trusted.

VIII. See what the world will be, when mankind are universally actuated by a spirit of love.

We learn that the time will come, when there shall be nothing to hurt or destroy, and when the Spirit of love will universally prevail. What a change in society! What a change in all the methods of doing business, and in all the intercourse of mankind, when each shall love his neighbour as himself, and seek the good of others as his own! Could one of the saints that live now revisit the earth in that day, he would not know the world in which he lived; every thing will be so altered. "Is it possible," he would exclaim, "that this is the earth; the same earth that used to be so full of jangling, and oppression, and fraud?"

IX. The thing on which the Lord Jesus Christ is bent, is to bring all mankind under the influence of love.

Is it not a worthy object? He came to destroy the works of the devil. And this is the way to do it. Suppose the world was full of such men as Jesus Christ was in his human nature. Compare it with what it is now. Would not such a change be worthy of the Son of God? What a glorious end, to fill the earth with love!

X. It is easy to see what makes heaven.

It is love—perfect love. And it is easy to see what makes heaven begun on earth, in those who are full of love. How sweet their temper, what delightful companions, how blessed to live near them, to associate with them, so full of candour, so kind, so gentle, so careful to avoid offence, so divinely amiable in all things!

And is this to be attained by men? Can we love God, here in this world, with all the heart, and soul, and strength, and mind? Is it our privilege and our duty to have the Spirit of Christ; and shall we exhibit the spirit of the devil? Beloved, let our hearts be set on perfect love, and let us give God no rest till we feel our hearts full of love, and till all our thoughts and all our lives are full of love to God and love to man. O! when will the church come up to this ground? Only let the church be full of love, and she will be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible to all wickedness, in high places and low places, as an army with banners.

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## THE REST OF THE SAINTS.

“For we which have believed do enter into rest.”—HEB. iv, 3.

THE following is the course of thought to which I wish to direct your attention this evening. I shall endeavour to show what *is not the rest* here spoken of.—Show *what* it is.—Show *when* we are to enter into this rest.—Show *how* to come into possession of this rest.—Show that all sin consists in or is caused by unbelief.

I. I will endeavour to show what is not the rest spoken of in the text.

It is evidently not a *state of inactivity* in religion, that is spoken of in the text under the name of *rest*.

The apostle who wrote this was very far from being himself inactive in religion, or from encouraging it in others. Those of whom he spoke, including himself, where he says, “*we* who have believed, do enter into rest,” would know at once that it was not true, that they had entered into the rest of supineness.

Neither are we to understand that the *perfect rest of heaven*, is the rest here spoken of.

He speaks of it as a present state, “*we do enter*,” which was not consistent with the idea that heaven is the rest here spoken of. The perfect rest of heaven includes an absolute freedom from all the pains, trials, sufferings and temptations of this life.—The rest of the believer here, may be of the *same nature*, substantially, with the rest in heaven. It is that rest begun on earth. But it is not made perfect. It differs in some respects, because it does not imply a deliverance from all trials, pains, sickness, and death. The apostles and primitive Christians had not escaped these trials, but still suffered their full share of them.

II. I will show what we are to understand by the rest here spoken of.

It is rest from controversy with God.

In this sense of cessation from controversy, the word rest, is often used in the Bible. In the context, it is said the children of Israel rested, when they were freed from their enemies. It is cessation from strife or war. Those who enter into this rest cease from their warfare with God, from their struggle against the truth, their war with their own conscience. The reproaches of conscience, that kept them in agitation, the slavish fears of the wrath of God under which men exert themselves as slaves in building up their own works, all are done away. They rest.

It implies *cessation from our own works*.

Cessation from works performed *for* ourselves.

Much of the apparent religion there is in the world is made up of works done by people which are their own, in this sense. They are working for their own lives—that is, they have this end in view, and are working *for* themselves, as absolutely as the man who is labouring for his bread. If the object of what you do in religion be, that *you* may be saved, it matters not whether it is from temporal or eternal ruin, it is for yourself, and you have not ceased from your own works, but are still multiplying works of your own. Now, the rest spoken of in the text, is entire cessation from all this kind of works.—The apostle, in verse 10th, affirms this: “He that is entered into his rest, hath ceased from his own works.” And in the text, he says, “We that believe do enter,” or have entered, “into rest.” It is plain that this rest is ceasing from our own works. Not ceasing from all kind of works, for that is true neither of the saints on earth nor of saints in heaven. We have no reason to believe that any saint or angel, or that God himself, or any holy being is ever inactive. But we cease to perform works with any such design as merely to save our own souls. It is ceasing to work for ourselves, that we may work for God. We are performing our own works, just as long as the supreme object of our works is to be saved. But if the question of our own salvation is thrown entirely on Jesus Christ, and our works are performed out of love to God, they are not our own works.

In entering into this rest, we cease from all works performed *from* ourselves, as well as works performed *for* ourselves.

Works are *from* ourselves, when they result from the simple, natural principles of human nature, such as conscience, hope, fear, &c., without the influences of the Holy Ghost. Such works are universally and wholly sinful. They are the efforts of selfishness, under the direction of mere natural principles.—His conscience convicts him, hope and fear come in aid, and under this influence, the carnal, selfish mind acts. Such acts cannot but be wholly sinful. It is nothing but selfishness.—Multiply the forms of selfishness by selfishness for ever, and it will never come to love. Where there is nothing but natural conscience pointing out the guilt and danger, and the constitutional susceptibilities of hope and fear leading to do something, it comes to nothing but the natural workings of an unsanctified mind. Such works are always the works of the flesh, and not the works of the Spirit. To enter into rest is to cease from all these, and no more to perform works *from* ourselves than *for* ourselves. Who does not know what a painful time those have who set about religion from themselves; painfully grinding out about so much religion a month, constrained by hope and fear, and lashed up to the work by conscience, but without the least impulse from that Divine principle of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost? All such works are just as much from themselves, as any work of any devil is. No matter what kind of works are performed, if the love of God is not the mainspring and life and heart of them, they are our own works, and there is no such thing as rest in them. We must cease from them because they set aside the gospel. The individual, who is actuated by these principles, sets aside the gospel in whole or in part. If he is actuated *only* by these considerations, he sets aside the gospel entirely. And just so far as he is influenced by them, he refuses to receive Christ as his Saviour in that relation. Christ is offered as a complete Saviour, as our Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. And just so far as any one is making efforts to dispense with a Saviour in any of these particulars, he is setting aside the gospel for so much.

To enter into rest implies that we cease from doing anything for ourselves.

We are not so much as to eat or drink for ourselves; “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” The man who has entered into this rest,

has ceased from doing it. God requires it, and he that has entered into rest has ceased to have any interest of his own. He has wholly merged his own interest in that of Christ. He has given himself so perfectly to Christ, that he has no work of his own to do. There is no reason why he should go about any work of his own. He knows he might as well sit still till he is in hell, as attempt anything of his own, as to any possibility of saving himself by any exertions of his own. When a man fully understands this, he ceases from making any efforts in this way. See the convicted sinner, how he will strain himself and put forth all his efforts to help himself, until he learns that he is nothing; and then he ceases from all this, and throws himself helpless and lost, into the hands of Christ. Until he feels that he is in himself without strength, or help, or hope, for salvation or anything that tends to it, he will never think of the simplicity of the gospel. No man applies to Christ for righteousness and strength, until he has used up his own, and feels that he is helpless and undone. Then he can understand the simplicity of the gospel plan, which consists in *receiving* salvation, by faith as a free gift. When he has done all that he could, in his own way, and finds that he has grown no better, that he is no nearer salvation, but rather grown worse, that sin is multiplied upon sin, and darkness heaped upon darkness, until he is crushed down with utter helplessness, then he ceases, and gives all up into the hand of Christ. See that sinner, trying to get into an agony of conviction, or trying to understand religion, and finding all dark as Egypt, and cannot see what it is that he must do. O! says he, what must I do? I am willing to do any thing. I can't tell why I don't submit, I know not how to do anything more; what am I to do, or *how shall I* find out what is the difficulty? When he is fully convinced, then he turns his eyes to the Saviour, and there he finds all he needs, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. Christ the Life of the world, the Light of the world, the Bread of life, and he needs nothing of all these but what is in Christ, that all he wants, and all he can ask, is in Christ and to be received by faith; then he ceases from his own works, and throws himself at once and entirely upon Christ for salvation.

To cease from our own works is to cease attempting to do anything in our own strength.

Every one who has entered into rest knows, that whatever he

does in his own strength will be an abomination to God. Unless Christ lives in him, unless God worketh in him, to will and to do of his good pleasure, nothing is ever done acceptably to God. To set himself to do anything in his own strength, independent of the Spirit of God, is for ever an utter abomination to God. He who has not learned this has not ceased from his own works, and has not accepted the Saviour. The apostle says, we are not able of ourselves to think anything, as of ourselves. The depth of degradation to which sin has reduced us is not understood until this is known and felt.

To enter into rest also includes the idea of throwing our burdens upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

He invites us to throw all our burdens and cares on him. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." These words mean just as they say. Whether your burden is temporal or spiritual, whether your care is for the soul or body, throw it all upon the Lord. See that little child, going along with his father; the father is carrying something that is heavy, and the child takes hold with its little hand to help, but what can he do towards carrying such a load? Many Christians make themselves a great deal of trouble, by trying to help the Lord Jesus Christ in his work. They weary and worry themselves with one thing and another, as if every thing hung on their shoulders. Now, the Lord Jesus Christ is as much pledged to the believer for *all* that concerns him, as he is for his justification; and just as absolutely bound for his temporal as for his eternal interests. There is nothing that concerns the Christian, which he is not to cast on the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not mean to be understood, that the Christian has no agency in the matter. Here is a man who has cast his family upon Jesus Christ; but he has not done it in any such manner that he is not to do any thing for his family. But he has so cast himself upon God, for direction, for light, for strength, for success, that he has yielded himself up absolutely to God, to guide and to sustain him; and Christ is pledged to see to it, that every thing is done right.

To enter into rest is to make the Lord Jesus Christ our Wisdom, our Righteousness, our Sanctification, and our Redemption; and to receive him in all his offices, as a full and perfect substitute for all our own deficiencies.

We lack all these things, absolutely, and are to receive Him as a full and perfect substitute, to fill the vacancy, and supply all our needs. It is to cease expecting or hoping or attempting any thing of ourselves, to fill the vacancy ; and receiving Christ as all.

Entering into this rest implies the yielding up of our powers so perfectly to his control, that henceforth all our works shall be his works.

I hope you will not understand any thing from this language, more mystical than the Bible. It is a maxim of the Common Law, that what a man does by another, he does by himself. Suppose I hire a man to commit murder ; the deed is as absolutely my own as if I had done it with my own hand. The crime is not in the hand which struck the blow, any more than it is in the sword that stabs the victim. The crime is in my mind. If I use another's hand, if my mind, as the moving cause, influenced him, it is my act still. Suppose that I had taken his hand by force, and used it to shoot my neighbour, would not that be my act ? Certainly, but it was in my mind, and it is just as much my act, if I influence his mind to do it. Now apply this principle to the doctrine, that the individual who has entered into rest has so yielded himself up to Christ's control, that all his works are the works of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul says, " I laboured more abundantly than they all ; yet not I, but the grace of God in me." And he frequently insists upon it, that it was not himself that did the works, but Christ in him. Do not misunderstand it now. It is not said, and is not to be so understood, that the believer acts upon compulsion, or that Christ acts in him without his own will, but that Christ by his Spirit dwelling in him, influences and leads his mind that he acts voluntarily in such a way as to please God. When one ceases from his own works, he so perfectly gives up his own interest and his own will, and places himself so perfectly under the dominion and guidance of the Holy Spirit, that whatever he does is done by the impulse of the Spirit of Christ. The Apostle describes it exactly, when he says, " Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do of his good pleasure." God influences the will, not by force but by love, to do just what will please him. If it was done by force, we should be no longer free agents. But it is love that so sweetly influences the will, and brings it entirely under the control of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not that our agency is suspended, but is employed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Our hands, our feet, our powers of body and mind, are all employed to work for him. He does not suspend the laws of our constitution, but so directs our agency, that the love of Christ so constrains us, that we will and do of his good pleasure.

Thus you see, that all works that are really good in man, are, in an important sense, Christ's works. This is affirmed in the Bible, over and over again, that our good works are not from ourselves, nor in any way by our own agency without God, but God directs our agency, and influences our wills, to do his will, and we do it. They are in one sense our works, because we do them by our voluntary agency. Yet in another sense they are his works, because he is the moving cause of all.

Entering into this rest implies, that insomuch as we yield our agency to Christ, insomuch we cease from sin.

If we are directed by the Lord Jesus Christ, he will not direct us to sin. Just as far as we give ourselves up to God we cease from sin. If we are controlled by him, so that he works in us, it is to will and to do of his good pleasure. And just so far as we do this, so far we cease from sin. I need not spend time to prove this.

III. I am to inquire *when* they that believe do enter into rest.

It is in this life.

This appears from the text and context. The apostle in connection with the text, was reasoning with the Jews. He warns them to beware, lest they fail of entering into the true rest, which was typified by their fathers entering in the land of Canaan. The Jews supposed *that* was the true rest. But the apostle argues with them, to show that there was a higher rest, of which the rest of temporal Canaan was only a type, and into which the Jews might have entered but for their unbelief. If Joshua had given them the real rest, he would not have spoken of another day. Yet another day is spoken of. Even so late as David's day, it is spoken of in the Psalms as yet to come: "To-day, after so long a time; as it is said, To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus (that is Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." He therefore argues, that the rest in

Canaan was not the real rest which was promised, but was typical of the true rest. What then was the true rest? It was the rest or repose of faith in Christ or the gospel state, a cessation from our own works. And believers enter into that state by faith.

I know it is generally supposed that the rest here spoken of is the heavenly rest, beyond this life. But it is manifestly a rest that commences here. "We which believe *do* enter into rest." It begins here, but extends into eternity. It is the same in kind, but made there more perfect in degree, embracing freedom from the sorrows and trials to which all believers are subject in this life. But it is the same in kind, the rest of faith, the Sabbath-keeping of the soul when it ceases from its own works, and casts itself wholly upon the Saviour.

It is manifest that this rest must commence in this world, if *faith* puts us in possession of it. This is the very point that the apostle was arguing, that faith is essential to taking possession of it. They "could not enter in because of unbelief." "Beware, lest ye fail of entering in after the same example of unbelief." He warns them not to indulge in unbelief, because by faith they may take immediate possession of the rest. If this rest by faith ever commences at all, it must be in this world.

The nature of the case proves this. Nothing short of this taking possession of rest is fully embracing Jesus Christ. It is a spiritual rest from the conflict with God, from the stings of conscience, and from efforts to help ourselves by any workings of our own mind. Nothing short of this is getting clear away from the law, or entering fully into the gospel.

IV. I am to show *how* we are to enter into this rest.

From what has already been said, you will understand that we take possession of it by faith.

The text, with the context, shows this. You will recollect also what the Lord Jesus Christ says, Matthew xi, 28, 29—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Here this same rest is spoken of, and we are told that if we will only come to Christ, we may find it. If we will take his easy yoke, which is love, and trust him to bear all our burdens, we shall find rest. The Psalmist speaks of the same



rest—"Return unto thy rest, O my soul." What Christian does not know what it is to have the soul rest in Christ, to hang upon his arm, and find rest from all the cares and perplexities and sorrows of life?

Again—It is evident that faith in Christ, from its own nature, brings the soul into the very state of rest which I have described. How instantly faith breaks up slavish fear, and brings the soul into the liberty of the gospel! How it sets us free from selfishness, and all those influences we formerly acted under! By faith we confide all to Christ, to lead us, and sanctify us, and justify us. And we may be just as certain to be led and to be sanctified, as we are to be justified, if we only exercise faith and leave ourselves in the hands of Christ *for all*. As a simple matter of fact, such faith brings the soul into a state of rest. The soul sees that there is no need of its own selfish efforts, and no hope from them if they were needed. In itself, it is so far gone in sin that it is as hopeless as if it had been in hell a thousand years. Take the best Christian on earth, and let the Lord Jesus Christ leave his soul, and where is he? Will he pray, or do anything good, or acceptable to God, without Christ? Never. The greatest saint on earth will go right off into sin in a moment, if abandoned by Jesus Christ. But faith throws all upon Christ, and that is rest.

Again: Faith makes us cease from all works *for* ourselves. By faith we see, that we have no more need of doing works for ourselves, than the child needs to work for his daily bread, whose father is worth millions. He may work, from love to his father, or from love to the employment, but not from any necessity to labour for his daily bread. The soul that truly understands the gospel, sees perfectly well that there is no need of mingling his own righteousness with the righteousness of Christ, or his own wisdom with the wisdom of Christ, or his own sufferings with the sufferings of Christ. If there was any need of this, there would be just so much temptation to selfishness, and to working from legal motives. But there is none.

Again: By faith the soul ceases from all works performed *from* itself. Faith brings a new principle into action, entirely above all considerations addressed to the natural principles, of hope and fear and conscience. Faith brings the mind under the influence of love. It takes the soul out from the influences of conscience, lashing it up to duty, and brings it under the in-

fluence of the same holy, heavenly principles, that influenced Christ himself.

Again : Faith brings the mind into rest, inasmuch as it brings it to cease from all efforts merely for its own salvation, and puts the whole being into the hands of Christ.

Faith is confidence. It is yielding up all our powers and interests to Christ, in confidence, to be led, and sanctified, and saved by him.

It annihilates selfishness, and thus leaves no motives for our own works.

In short : Faith is an absolute resting of the soul in Christ, for all that it needs, or can need. It is trusting him for every thing. For instance—Here is a little child, wholly dependent on its father. Now, if the little child did not trust its father, it must be constantly miserable. It is absolutely dependent on its father, for house and home, food and raiment, and every thing under the sun. Yet that little child feels no uneasiness, because it confides in its father. It rests in him, and gives itself no uneasiness, but that he will provide all that it needs. It is just as cheerful and happy, all the day long, as if it had all things in itself, because it has such confidence. Now the soul of the believer rests in Christ, just as the infant does on the arms of its mother. The penitent sinner, like a condemned wretch, hangs all on Christ, without the least help or hope, only as they come from Christ alone, and as Christ does all that is needed.

If faith does consist in thus trusting absolutely in Christ, then it is manifest, that this rest is taken possession of, when we believe ; and that it must be in this life, if faith is to be exercised in this life.

V. I am to show that unbelief is the cause of all the sin there is in the world.

I do not mean to imply, by this, that unbelief is not itself a sin ; but to say, that it is the fountain, out of which flows all other sin. Unbelief is distrust of God, or want of confidence. It is manifest that it was this want of confidence which constituted Adam's real crime. It was not the mere eating of the fruit, but the distrust which led to the outward act, that constituted the real crime, for which he was cast out of Paradise. That unbelief is the cause of all sin, is manifest from the following considerations :

The moment an individual wants faith, and is left to the sim

ple influence of natural principles and appetites, he is left just like a beast, and the things that address his mind through the senses, alone influence him. The motives that influence the mind when it acts right, are discerned by faith. Where there is no faith, there are no motives before the mind, but such as are confined to this world. The soul is then left to its mere constitutional propensities, and gives itself up to the minding of the flesh. This is the natural and inevitable result of unbelief. The eye is shut to eternal things, and there is nothing before the mind, calculated to beget any other action but that which is selfish. It is therefore left to grovel in the dust, and can never rise above its own interest and appetites. It is a natural impossibility that the effect should not be so; for how can the mind act without motives? But the motives of eternity are seen only by faith. The mere mental and bodily appetites that terminate on this world, can never raise the mind above the things of this world, and the result is only sin, sin, sin, the minding of the flesh for ever. The very moment Adam distrusted God, he was given up to follow his appetites. And it is so with all other minds.

Suppose a child loses all confidence in his father. He can henceforth render no hearty obedience. It is a natural impossibility. If he pretends to obey, it is only from selfishness, and not from the heart; for the mainspring and essence of all real hearty obedience is gone. It would be so in heaven, it is so in hell. Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is a natural impossibility to obey God in such a manner as to be accepted of him, without faith. Thus unbelief is shown to be the fountain of all the sin in earth and hell, and the soul that is destitute of faith, is just left to work out its own damnation.

#### REMARKS.

I. The rest which those who believe do enter into here on earth, is of the same nature with the heavenly rest.

The heavenly rest will be more complete; for it will be a rest from all the sorrows and trials to which even a perfect human soul is liable here. Even Christ himself experienced these trials and sorrows and temptations. But the soul that believes, rests as absolutely in him here, as in heaven.

II. We see why faith is said to be *the substance* of things hoped for.

Faith is the very thing that makes heaven ; and therefore it is the substance of heaven, and will be to all eternity.

III. We see what it is to be led by the Spirit of God.

It is to yield up all our powers and faculties to his control, so as to be influenced by the Spirit in all that we do.

IV. We see that perfect faith would produce perfect love, or perfect sanctification.

A perfect yielding up of ourselves, and continuing to trust all that we have and are to Christ, would make us perfectly holy.

V. We see that just as far as any individual is not sanctified, it is because his faith is weak.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth, if his disciples fell into sin, he always reproached them with a want of faith : " O ye of little faith." A man that believes in Christ has no more right to expect to sin, than he as a right to expect to be damned. You may startle at this, but it is true.

You are to receive Christ as your sanctification, just as absolutely as for your justification. Now you are bound to expect to be damned, unless you receive Christ as your justification. But if you receive him as such, you have then no reason and no right to expect to be damned. Now, he is just as absolutely your sanctification, as your justification. If you depend upon him for sanctification, he will no more let you sin, than he will let you go to hell. And it is as unreasonable, and unscriptural and wicked, to expect one as the other. And nothing but unbelief, in any instance, is the cause of your sin. Some of you have read the life of Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers, and recollect how habitual it was with her, when any temptation assailed her, instantly to throw herself upon Christ. And she testifies, that in every instance he sustained her.

Take the case of Peter. When the disciples saw Christ walking upon the water, after their affright was over, Peter requested to be permitted to come to him on the water, and Christ told him to come ; which was a promise on the part of Christ, that if he attempted it, he should be sustained. But for this promise, his attempt would have been tempting God. But with this promise, he had no reason and no right to doubt. He made the attempt, and while he believed, the energy of Christ bore him up, as if he had been walking upon the ground. But as soon as he began to doubt, he began to sink. Just so it is with the soul ; as soon as it begins to doubt the willingness and the power of

Christ to sustain it in a state of perfect love, it begins to sink. Take Christ at his word, make him responsible, and rely on him, and heaven and earth will sooner fail than he will allow such a soul to fall into sin. Say, with Mrs. Rogers, when Satan comes with a temptation, "Lord Jesus, here is a temptation to sin, see thou to that."

VI. You see why the self-denying labours of saints are consistent with being in a state of rest.

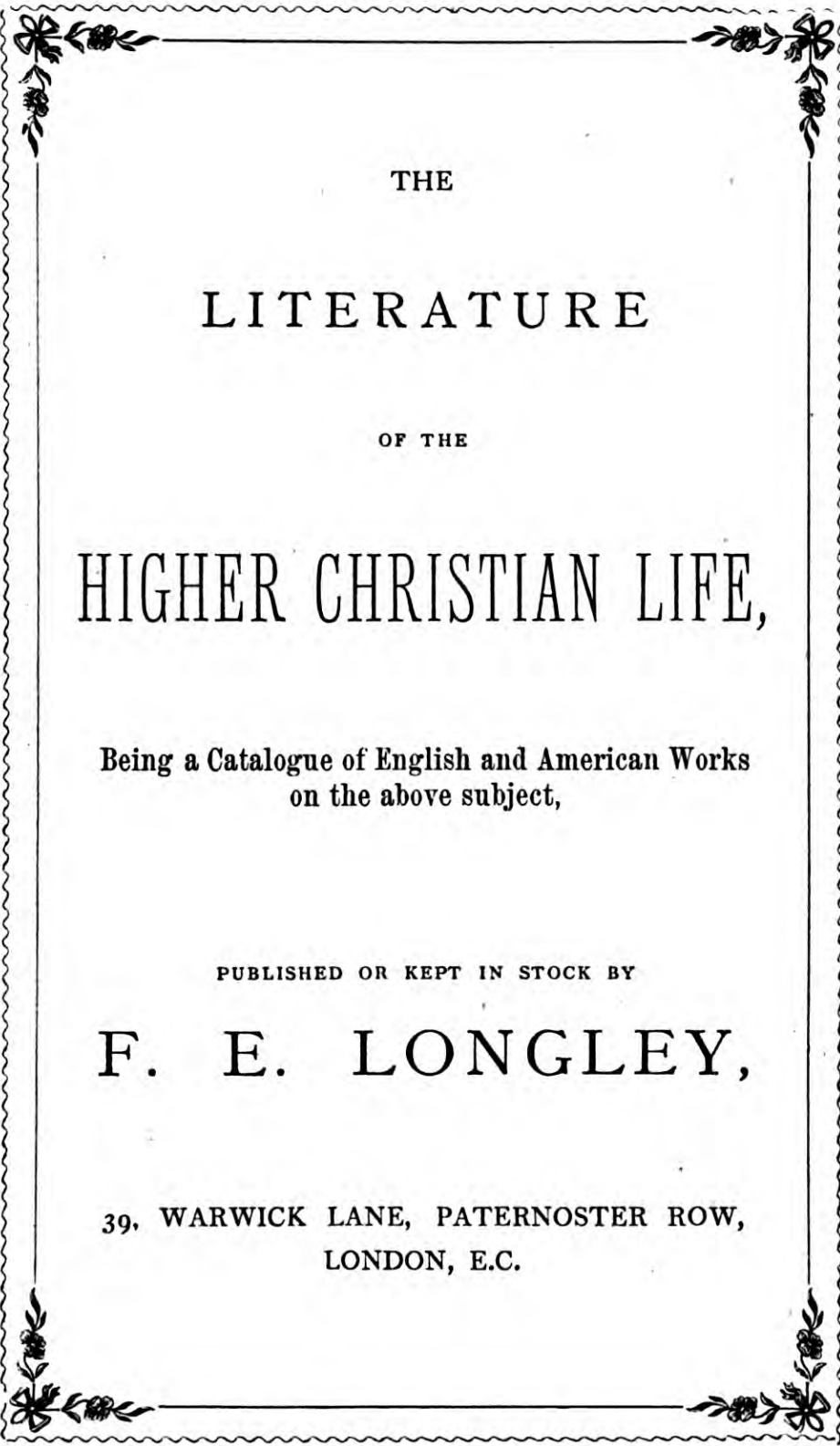
These self-denying labours are all constrained by love, and have nothing in them that is compulsory or hard. Inward love draws them to duty. So far is it from being true, that the self-denying labours of Christians are hard work, that it would be vastly more painful to them NOT to do it. Their love for souls is such, that if they were forbidden to do anything for them, they would be in agony. In fact, a state of inaction would be inconsistent with this rest. How could it be rest, for one whose heart was burning and bursting with love to God and to souls, to sit still and do nothing for them. But it is perfect rest for the soul to go out in prayer and effort for their salvation. Such a soul cannot rest, while God is dishonoured and souls destroyed, and nothing done for their rescue. But when all his powers are used for the Lord Jesus Christ, this is true rest. Such is the rest enjoyed by angels, who cease not day nor night, and who are all ministering spirits, to minister to the heirs of salvation.

The apostle says, "Take heed, therefore, lest a promise being left of entering into rest, any of you should come short of it." And "Let us labour therefore, to enter into rest." Do any of you know what it is to come to Christ, and rest in him? Have you found rest, from all your own efforts to save yourselves, from the thunders of Sinai, and the stings of conscience? Can you rest sweetly in Jesus, and find in him everything essential to sanctification and eternal salvation? Have you found actual salvation in him? If you have, then you have entered into rest. If you have not found this, it is because you are still labouring to perform your own works.

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