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"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET ITS CUNNING."—Ps. 137, v. 5.

SERMON,

By the Rev. James Hamilton, D. D., London.

"Not slothful in business."—ROMANS, xii. 11.

Two things are very certain,—that we have all got a work to do, and are all, more or less, indisposed to do it: In other words, every man has a calling, and most men have a greater or less amount of indolence, which disinclines them for the work of that calling. Many men would have liked the gospel all the better, if it had entirely repealed the sentence, "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread;" had it proclaimed a final emancipation from industry, and turned our world into a merry play-ground or luxurious dormitory. But this is not what the gospel does. It does not abolish labor; it gives it a new and nobler aspect. The gospel abolishes labor much in the same way as it abolishes death; it leaves the thing, but changes its nature. The gospel sweetens the believer's work; it gives him new motives for performing it. The gospel dignifies toil; it transforms it from the drudgery of the work-house or the penitentiary, to the affectionate offices and joyful services of the fire-side and the family circle. It asks us to do for the sake of Christ many things which we were once compelled to bear as a portion of the curse, and which worldly men perform for selfish and secondary reasons. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord." "Servants, obey in all things your

masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men, knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." The gospel has not superseded diligence. "Study to be quiet and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you." "If any man will not work, neither let him eat." It is mentioned as almost the climax of sin, "And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busy-bodies, speaking things which they ought not;" as on the other hand, the healthy and right-conditioned state of a soul is, "not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."

I. This precept is violated by those who have no business at all. By the bounty of God's providence, some are in such a situation that they do not need to toil for a subsistence; they go to bed when they please, and get up when they can sleep no longer, and they do with themselves whatever they like; and though we dare not say that theirs is the happiest life, it certainly is the easiest. But it will neither be a lawful life nor a happy one, unless it have some work in hand, some end in view. Those of you who are familiar with the sea-shore, may have seen attached to the inundated reef, a creature, whether a plant or an animal you could scarcely tell, rooted to the rock as a plant might be, and twirling its long tentacula as an animal would do. This plant-animal's life is some-