

SERMON.

TEXT : 2 TIMOTHY, iv. 8.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

A Christian man is a divine man. He has in him two natures, the human and the divine. By the mystical and mysterious union in Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, he is a partaker of the divine nature. The words selected to guide our meditations were uttered by one who in conscientious ignorance had persecuted the Lord upon whom he was then gazing by faith. When Stephen, the proto-martyr, beneath the cruel blows of his murderers, looked into the open heaven, and saw the Son of God in His glory, the outer garments of the men who stoned him were laid at the feet of "a young man whose name was Saul." That same young man we now find in the evening of life, prematurely aged, sitting chained in the dense darkness of a Roman dungeon, and uplifted by the inspired hope he here describes. No hope of escape from the unjust doom awaiting him on earth could arise in his breast. Calmly he waits, expecting every moment to hear the footfall of the messenger sent to execute the bloody behest of the tyrant Nero. What are his thoughts? We are not left in doubt. "I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand." These words are significant. Paul had laid himself on the altar, and was now being poured out as a libation before God. He was ready to loose the cable;