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If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."---Psalm 137, v.5.

Sermon

By the Rev. Mr. Anderson, Wallace,

"Beheld the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."---St. John, xvi, 32.

Man is a social being. His nature, his affection, desires and wants bind him to his brother-man. Isolation in space or spirit is painful to him, because it is a contradiction and outrage of one of the strongest—if not the strongest—of the instincts of his nature. The man that lives and moves and has his being within the pale of society, and there finds the fullest fountain of his pleasures and the field of his highest and noblest duty is universally respected. While, on the other hand, the man who shuns the face of man and whose heart vibrates not in unison with the common pulse of humanity is universally considered to belie his nature, and to have erred and strayed from the path laid out by the wise Creator. Indeed the man of sound mind has only to cast a look within his own breast to find a potent power that impels heart to heart, soul to soul, disposition to disposition. The stream gushing from some alpine glacier or from the cleft of a hoary rock on some lone mountain side, never rests till it mingles with its kindred waters. Tho' now murmuring over its pebbly bed, now flowing in deep, broad pools, that form liquid mirrors to reflect the grass and flower and tree that adorn its banks, now rushing with the speed of a race horse over boulder and rock, yet amidst all these changes in its season and course it never rests till it

reaches the bosom of mother ocean. In like manner the social current that has its rise in the affections, wants and desires of man, flows and never ceases to flow till it joins the ocean of humanity. Thus the man that is true to this natural instinct is satisfied only when we find another whose ear is open to receive the burden of his soul, whose arm is ready for him to lean upon in weakness and weariness, and whose eye reflects the changing moods of his spirit, where your pity and companionship doubles his joys and shares his sorrows.

From the earliest times banishment was employed to punish law-breakers. This punishment was regarded as severe, because it lacerates the strong instinct of companionship and friendship. Next to death, the severest punishment that can be inflicted on a man is to separate him from his home and the place of his birth, and the scenes hallowed and endeared by the sacred memories and associations of early days. What can be more grievous to a man's heart than to have to look upon faces dear and familiar, and to hear a well-known voice tremulous with deep emotion pronounce his name as what he may never, never see or hear again. Removed to die and suffer beneath a strange sky and a foreign shore with no friend to bless him with even a word or look of love and sympathy, cannot but grieve the heart and wound the spirit. Fain would he burst asunder the bonds of his banishment and loneliness and seek the pleasure of friendship. This may help us to conceive how a sense of loneliness would depress the work of Jesus. For in no human breast was the ties of companionship and friendship stronger than in that of Jesus.