

iniquity of the house of Israel was full, that His eye should not spare, neither would He pity any more. After this the man with the inkhorn returned and reported the performance of the work,—“I have done as Thou hast commanded me.”

If we refer this to the work of our Saviour on behalf of His chosen ones, we have a beautiful and affecting view of the work of salvation. The place where the prophet saw the man with the inkhorn by his side was the brazen altar. This might lead us to speak of Christ, as undertaking the work of redemption committed to Him by the Father. The work He performed as Mediator was a voluntary one, for, when the call was made for judgement on offenders, when all was ready for the work, when the ministering servants stood with their slaughter-weapons in their hands, the man with the inkhorn by his side came, attired in the costume betokening his occupation and employment. He came. He was not called or commanded to come, and his being by the brazen altar betokened his readiness to do whatever was commanded. Here then we have a view of “*the man*,” all prepared and ready for the work, as is written in the volume of the book, “To do Thy will, O God, I take delight,” and, in the words of the text, we are led to behold the last scene of the Redeemer’s work on Earth as He hung on the cross, and cried with a loud voice “It is finished,” or, to use the words of the text, “I have done as Thou hast commanded me.”

During the Christian dispensation, or the existence of the Church militant, we are not to look upon the work of the man with the inkhorn by his side as fully performed. It is true Christ fulfilled the law, and finished the work given Him to do: that is all right in the sight of Heaven, there all is complete, so that righteousness reigneth, and joy and gladness is in every heart. But, as far as man is concerned, there is still a portion of the work going on, for, as long as man exists in the World, and as far as he individually is concerned, the work is not finished. It was necessary therefore that some means be adopted whereby the finished work might be applied to him. These means were the ministry of reconciliation, the preaching of the Word, the appointment of men who should in all times make known the great work, or, to use the imagery of the text, whereby those, “who sigh and cry for the abomination that is done in the midst,” should be marked upon their foreheads. This work, is outwardly accomplished by the appointment of the Ministry of the Gospel—men qualified and set aside for the peculiar duties of the work, which in the text is symbolized by the man clothed in linen, with the writer’s inkhorn by his side.

Before leaving this world, Christ Himself appointed His Apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel. Other ministering servants were trained up under them, who in turn preached and taught

the Truth as it is in Jesus; and a succession of men fitted for this work has been raised up ever since, who not only spread abroad the Word of God but, as ambassadors for King Jesus, beseech men to be reconciled to God. Without infringing on the dogma of the Apostolic Succession, or any of those arguments which the arrogance of man has set up, we will content ourselves with saying that, since the time when Christ sent forth His Apostles, there has been a regular succession of those who have publicly proclaimed the will of God, or, as in the text, men standing by the brazen altar, clothed in linen, and with the writer’s inkhorn by their side, who have gone forth as they were commanded, and through whose instrumentality many are now surrounding the Throne, who were marked or sealed on earth, and who were thus brought to the knowledge of the wonderful works of God to usward.

And in our day is there not the ministration of the Gospel in this manner? Fathers and brethren, are we not living examples of this very work? We have been regularly educated for the work of the ministry, publicly called on or set aside for the performance of the duties of this office, clothed with authority to warn sinners of the evil of their ways, to preach the love of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and ordained by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery for administering the ordinances of Religion and dispensing the seals of the Covenant.

This is the very imagery of the text, and I consider that it is peculiarly applicable to us as ministers of the Gospel, as ministering priests, whose proper position and station is symbolized by the man standing at the brazen altar.

Fathers and brethren, where did you stand on the day of your ordination? On that day did you not stand in the temple of God, in the presence of the assembled congregation? Did you not in the most solemn manner accept of the office of a ministering servant, and the call to go forth to the performance of the duties of a minister of God’s sanctuary? On your bended knees were you not set aside by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery? And, in obedience to these professions, have not the majority of those present left the land of our nativity, the homes of our fathers, and the places hallowed by so many endearing ties and associations, and in this colony, where so many of our countrymen have fixed their abode, given ourselves up to the work of the ministry. Need I occupy your time at present in drawing a parallel between the work in which you are engaged and the work given to the man clothed with linen, and having the writer’s inkhorn by his side? To go, as he was commanded, through the midst of the city, surely does not mean to go through the principal parts, that is, near the king’s palace or where the nobles and privates dwell, but the most

crowded thoroughfares, the most densely populated places and those localities where the multitudes congregate—those who have neither the means nor the inclination of obtaining knowledge for themselves.

In the midst of such labours, and engaged in such a work, would it be impertinent for a fellow-labourer to ask of you, Fathers and brethren, Is it well with you? How have you been conducting yourselves? What success has attended your labours? Are you looking forward to the termination of your work in the ministry so as to be able to say in the words of “the man,” standing by the brazen altar, “I have done as Thou hast commanded me?” and thereby to deserve the salutation given to every faithful servant, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, enter thou into the joys of thy Lord.”

methinks I hear some of you say, I have laboured, I have wrought, I have toiled, but, alas, I fear that few marks of my ministry are visible, and that the complaint of the Prophet of old is too applicable to me, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed”. But remember, O desponding brother, that it is not for you to say what the success has been, or how many have been marked by your instrumentality. It is for those who come after you to find that out,—the messengers of vengeance, who go through with the slaughtering weapons in their hands. Or, perhaps, what may be more appropriate in your case, when the relentless tyrant, Death, strikes down with his unerring hand every child of Adam, it is then that the mark made by the ink from the writer’s inkhorn shall appear, for they that died in the Lord have been sealed unto the day of redemption. Afflictions cannot efface that mark, trials cannot remove it, death itself only makes it appear the more prominently and fixes it the more indelibly.

I would ask, Have you not found the streets of the city very uneven? Have you not found abominations prevailing to an alarming extent? Have you not found many saying, “The Lord seeth us not?” Have you not found the prince of darkness extending his potent sway: and the destroyers of souls everywhere ready to pounce upon perishing souls with eager grasp? would ask you, as was done to the Prophet, “Have you seen this, O son of man?” And is your answer like his “I have seen this and greater abominations than this?” Then bear with me if I touch on some of the difficulties we meet with in going through the midst of the city, or in the performance of our ministerial work.

It is thought by many, and, O! what a foolish thought, that there is no work more easy than that of the ministry: but I readily appeal to the experience of every minister present that, so far from being an easy work, it is the most difficult. The Bible, how impossible to understand it