

SERMON.

(By the late Rev. Peter Gordon.)

"I acknowledge my transgression." Psalms li. 3.

God is governor of the universe. In the material world he has set bounds to all its movements which it cannot pass. In the moral, spiritual, intelligent world he hath set bounds which we ought not to transgress. He is the father of spirits to whom we ought to submit and live. He hath an unquestionable right to reign. He rules and ought to rule in the armies of heaven, and to do what seemeth him good among us the inhabitants of the earth. But obedience on our part is most reasonable, most beneficial and honorable. Every deviation from truth, from God, in thought, word and deed is most abominable, unprofitable and disgraceful. With shame and confusion of face, therefore, should every one of us this day adopt the language of the text: "I acknowledge my transgression."

Unless we acknowledge our transgressions there can be no right mourning and humiliation on account of sin. In order therefore to aid the exercises of this day permit me briefly to show what the acknowledgement of transgression implies.

1. In the first place it implies a deep conviction of the evil of sin. Until we be convinced that sin is an evil, a great evil, we will never acknowledge it as such. It is impossible that any one can with the heart, in sincerity acknowledge that to be an evil, which he does not think is so. Neither should we be satisfied with a general vague acknowledgement that we are all sinners. Many utter the expression, who have no solid conviction of the real evil of sin; that by means of it they stand guilty before God, condemned by him, and subjected to eternal misery. We must be convinced that sin is against God himself, else we will never acknowledge it unto him. "Against thee, and thee only" says the Psalmist "have I sinned, and in thy sight have I done this evil". And says another, "How shall I do this great evil and sin against God." All sin supposes a law of which it is the transgression, and every law supposes a superior. But in morality all creatures are equal, no one has a right to dictate for the faith or practice of another. And when God commits the execution of his law to men he reckons obedience to these laws, obedience to himself and not to men. So that all sin, whatever, is directly against the holy nature, the rightful authority and the perfect law of God. Now, since God is supremely excellent and good, sin must be inexpressibly evil and detestable; since God is the standard of all moral rectitude, sin must be the perfection of deformity. God himself and his law are supremely holy, just and good, therefore sin must be infinitely abominable, iniquitous and pernicious. The more we discover of the perfection and glory of the divine character, the more we will be convinced of the deformity and vileness of our transgressions. When we obtain the discoveries of divine glory which the prophet had, we will also have the deep conviction of sin which he had, and make the same honest acknowledgement of transgressions which he did. "I saw," says he, "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple, and one cried unto