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The Christian Watchman

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Original Contributions

Sermon,

BY

REV. T. W. CRAWLEY, A. M.

The following sermon was delivered by Rev. Mr. Crawley on Sabbath evening Oct. 13th in the Baptist Chapel, Leinster street, and by the special request of the Church has been handed to us for publication. We commend it to the serious and prayerful consideration of our readers.—[ED. WATCHMAN.

THE LOVE OF GOD DISPLAYED IN THE ETERNAL PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."—Matt. xxv. 46.

We have heard the opinion expressed by some of our good old fashioned Christians, that the doctrine of eternal punishment is not preached, in the present day, with that apparent conviction of its truth and importance with which it was proclaimed by our venerable fathers in the ministry. Perhaps this is true; and we believe the fact has led many to conclude, that ministers of the present generation are not so bold as those of the past in declaring "the whole counsel of God." Although the Apostle says, "by the terrors of the law we persuade men," still we do not infer, that this is the fixed, and only effectual method to be pursued in winning the souls of men. Indeed, good, and able ministers have made sad mistakes in making untimely, and incautious appeals to the fears of sinners. They may be said to have manifested "a zeal, not according to knowledge" in the too frequent repetition of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and in their use of extravagant terms, and overwrought manner of delivery. We believe, that many an able preacher has greatly weakened the force of his arguments on this doctrine, by their too frequent repetition and length, and his influence, too, has been enfeebled, by allowing his sermons to be characterized as harsh and severe.

When Christ called the poor fishermen of Galilee to the office of the ministry, he said, that he would make them "fishers of men," clearly implying, that a similar patience, and cunning, in winning the souls of men, was to be used as in the art of catching fish. In the Bible we have a reliable guide book in the work of preaching, in which are laid down in systematic order, rules and cautions drawn up with omniscient skill and precision.

Satan is represented as a fowler, and the sinner as caught in his snare. It is the business of the faithful preacher of the Gospel, to whom God has intrusted the care of precious souls, to warn men of their danger, that they may recover themselves out of Satan's snare, and flee unto Jesus with repentance and faith. With unwearied assiduity, he must plainly instruct them in the doctrine of human depravity, that in their unregenerated state, they are under the dominion of sin, and justly exposed to its fearful consequences, and while they remain in this condition, they are utterly helpless, being the bondslaves of sin, nay, the children of the Devil: joint heirs with him of future wrath, to which wrath, it must be faithfully proved to them, they are continually exposed, because constantly on the verge of death and eternity. And when we have the evidence that the conscience is alarmed at this danger, and the soul is anxiously concerned about eternal things, we gently allure them to come to Jesus by assuring them of the many precious promises that God will fulfill if they return unto him in true repentance and faith. We assure them from the recorded testimony of those who were the living witnesses of the privileges of these promises, and from our own experience, that they may be enjoyed here, while eternal life, happiness and glory, are reserved for them hereafter, in the heavenly, eternal Kingdom of God their Father.

Again, lest they should hesitate to embrace these blessings, by reason of a deep sense of their unworthiness, we strive to convince them, that God's love in Christ was manifested for this very reason. We are authorized to extend the invitation, made by John in the wilderness, by directing sinners to "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," and to "look upon him, whom they have pierced," that they may mourn for those sins, which caused such inexpressible agony and death. In imitation of Jesus and his Apostles, we present this great sum of profit and loss for their immediate and faithful solution "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" We appeal to their sober reason by demonstrating how paltry the recompense of any temporal acquisitions really is, however highly prized and desired, in comparison with the eternal salvation of the soul—and on the other hand how irrevocable and fearful will appear the final exchange of eternal joys for temporal pleasures, while suffering the tortures of a disquieted and guilty conscience throughout Eternity!

Now, then, if all these faithful appeals to reason, and the conscience, and the heart, seem to be in vain, we are directed to "persuade them by the terms of the law." Rather than leave them alone to perish in their sins and in their delusion, we must have recourse to this last method of argument by disclosing to them God's fiery law, flashing conviction into the guilty conscience, and thundering forth its curses from Sinai, amidst blackness and darkness and tempest upon the unholy and impenitent. We must declare, under a heavy penalty of woe, if we should neglect, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the moral law to do them." And lest they should suppose, that the Gospel is less holy than the law, that it makes more allowance for sin, and shows more mercy to impenitent sinners persisting in their transgressions, its more dreadful threatenings must, also, be disclosed, clothed with all their awful authority. "He that believeth not, shall be damned;" shall be driven away in his wickedness from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Now, then, we bring before men their natural condition. We strive to persuade them of the bondage of sin, their spiritual helplessness, and the imminent danger of their soul, not to taunt, and intimidate them, but in order that, feeling their danger they may be led to cry out for deliverance, and that, knowing they cannot deliver themselves, they may be led to trust in Christ, who can deliver and save them. And we make these awful disclosures of the penalties attached to God's violated law, that they may be driven to take refuge in Christ, now, before it shall be utterly too late. But, if we discover that this method of persuasion, causes them rather to stand in awe of Christ, viewing him as a Law giver and Judge, than to approach him as a Redeemer and Saviour—if they are terrified under a sense of their sinfulness, and guilt, and are not persuaded that he will forgive them; why, then we must endeavor to encourage them to "draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith." We disclose to them the special object of his mission, which he declared himself "I, came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." We arrange before them the many gracious offers of his mercy and love, and assure them of his unparallelled sympathy of all their manifold infirmities, that he is always ready to comfort, and give them "grace to help in time of need." In all the affecting language of the Scripture, in which he is described as the great gift of the Father to the sinner, we continue to allure him, by declaring, that "He was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," that, "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all: he was opposed, he was afflicted, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed." He died for them, even when they were ungodly; He is able to save them, even when they have been cast off by their companions in guilt, even when they have lost all self-respect and confidence. He is able, He is willing "to save unto the uttermost all who come to God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

And, now, dear hearers, we call you to witness, whether we have not closely adhered, during the year that we have labored among you, to this order in our public administrations of the Gospel? We ask you to answer the question, now, because the same question will be asked of you and me, by the judge, when we shall be arraigned before his tribunal. While we have freely striven, so to dispense the word, that saints may be edified, and comforted, yet, believing that there are some among you, who are without hope in Christ, we have tried to alarm them with faithful representations of the danger of their unconverted state. We have attempted to allure them by unfolding the precious promises of God in Christ Jesus, and draw them by the cords of his love; but finding that all these efforts failed, in compliance with our Master's desire, and the apostles declaration, we have labored to drive them to Christ with the threatenings of God's law. And we have not characterized our sermons, by confining our thoughts to any one of these modes, but have endeavored to treat of every variety of subjects. As we, on a former occasion, exhibited the justice of God in the eternal punishment of the wicked, and dwelt at some length, upon its nature and reasonableness, we shall confine our remarks, more particularly, to another phase of the subject by exhibiting the love of God in the eternal punishment of the wicked.

We shall not attempt to work ourselves up into a perfect frenzy of excitement upon this subject, and violently hurl down upon your heads the whole magazine of the thunderbolts and fiery missiles of the law, and, in our fury, lavish out unsparingly all those extravagent expressions which some preachers are accustomed to use, but, cautiously, thoughtfully, and earnestly examine this subject in the light we have now proposed.

The subject of eternal punishment, whenever it is placed before a congregation for consideration, carries sufficient motive power in itself, we think, to arouse the feelings and fasten the attention. And, while it is being unfolded, and established by a process of irrefutable argument, many may exclaim, in their excitement, "you may reason as you like about the eternal punishment of the wicked, but I don't believe, I can't believe, that a merciful, a good, a righteous, loving God, can punish a man in hell forever for his sins. The idea is too awful—too horrible to believe! Why, if I believed that, I don't know what I should do! I would either believe the Bible, and the whole system of Christianity to be a falsehood, or else I would go crazy!" Well we do say, that the tremendous thought of suffering throughout all eternity, as the natural fruit, the terrible harvest reaped by my own hand, as the product of my own sinful sowing throughout a life-time on earth! Such a thought, we say, is enough to curdle the blood and turn the brain. And, it is a wonder to me, that we do not hear of more cases of incurable insanity being made on account of it. And the only way that any man can remain unmoved, indifferent, and apparently sane in his faculties, is, by determining to live a life of open denial of the existence of God and the truth of Revelation.

To be concluded next week.

For the Christian Watchman.

Studies for the Sunday School.

SECOND SERIES.

NUMBER II.

THE TEMPTATION—DESERT OF JUDEA.

Matt. iv. 1—11. Mark, i. 12—14. Luke, iv. 1—13.

Jesus had now formally entered on his mission. He was to accomplish the work which his Father had given him to do. Immediately after his baptism, He was impelled by the spiritual influence which then descended upon him, to leave the Jordan and go into the dreariest solitude of the wilderness of Judea, there to be tempted by the devil. He did not himself seek temptation, but was led into it for the wisest of purposes. The end of this temptation was that Christ might have his own perfect purity of heart thoroughly tested, that thus he might prove his fitness for his glorious mission—moreover that in the outset of his cause he might gain a decisive victory over Satan, and finally that he might learn by experience how to pity his people in their temptations.

Satan did not come to Jesus in any bodily shape, thus he would have defeated his own schemes, by forewarning and forearming him whom he hoped to make his victim.

The adversary seeks Jesus at a time when he would have the fairest chances to overcome him. The Saviour had fasted forty days in the dreary solitude, far away from the society of the lost ones whom he came to save, far away from scenes which might have animated him to resistance of temptation, with no companions but those wild beasts who inhabit these gloomy wilds. Now, when weary with watching and exhausted with fatigue, the enemy seeks a victim. Satan well knew what tremendous interests were at stake. He knew that the future destinies of the world were trembling in the balance, could he now lure the Saviour into one sin, could he now overcome him when weary and fainting, then man would be forever given up to death and hell.

Satan timed his efforts well, and had ingeniously planned his assault. He first endeavors to lure Jesus to a misuse of his powers, he tempts him to use for selfish sensual purposes the divine energies which were at his command, just as ever since man has been tempted to prostitute his talent, to sense and self interest.

Thus he addresses the Son of man. Thou art very hungry, thy sufferings are very severe, now if thou art really the Son of God, if thou art not merely a deceiver and imposter, relieve thy necessities, summon thy divine energies, and transform these stones to bread.

But Jesus saw the drift of the temptation, he would not use powers, designed for other and higher purposes, for the gratification of his bodily appetite. He knew well that when God chooses he can sustain his people, by means apart from the ordinary. Hence he readily repels the temptation. Thus he answers Satan, it is written, that man's NECESSITIES can be satisfied by other means than those which human wisdom would devise, man does not live by bread only, but by the power of God, in whatever way he chooses to exert that power Deut. viii. 3. I will not work a miracle to satisfy my hunger, when God can preserve my life by other means.

Satan now falls back on another temptation which he had planned. He would if possible lure him to presumption. Christ had expressed such undoubting confidence in the power of God, that it seemed probable to the tempter, that he might make this confidence an occasion of sin.

He now leads Jesus to Jerusalem and carries him up to a lofty tower of the temple which rose from the brow of the hill on which this structure was erected. Now the tempter says: You place great confidence in God's ability to protect and support, by means apart from the ordinary. He has promised to give his angels charge over them to guard them—to embrace them with their protecting arms, lest they meet with the slightest injury—now trust to this promise. If you are the Son of God it will certainly apply to you.

But Jesus resists this temptation. Such conduct he says would be to misuse promises given for the encouragement of his people. To do this, to make an arbitrary and self-willed use of such gracious assurances would be to tempt the Most High, and it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Deut. vi. 16.

The adversary now became desperate. He knew how anxious Jesus was to become recognized by men as their king. He knew that Christ came to set up a throne, and establish an authority over the hearts and the lives of men. He now offers to make no resistance, to surrender up the world to Christ on condition that he will pay him homage and receive it from him.

He takes Jesus to a high mountain and shows him at a glance all the kingdoms of the heathen world. He exhibits them in all their power and splendor. Now, said he, these kingdoms are mine, I have been permitted to possess them, I can surrender them up to whom I will. Mighty and glorious, and numerous as they are I will now surrender them up to thee, if thou will do me homage for them, if thou wilt receive them as my gift, if thou wilt be satisfied with taking them as they are. Be a visible temporal king. Why suffer, why die? Pay me homage and take them.

This temptation was too palpable, the devil had in his eagerness overshot his mark, and now he stood, the fiend undisguised.

Jesus answers him with holy indignation burning in his soul, depart from me thou fell enemy of all good, it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Then Satan foiled departed for a time, to seek other opportunities to lead astray the holy and now victorious Son of God. Then angels descended from heaven to comfort the soul of Jesus after this painful trial, to rejoice with him in his glorious victory, and to afford sustenance to his now exhausted body. A. B. C.

THE BLESSING OF SIMEON.

MISSION OF JESUS—SALVATION AND DESTRUCTION.

NUMBER 2.

The language of Simeon as with the infant Jesus in his arms, he blessed God for the gift of one who was to be a Saviour for all nations—a Light unto the world, excited the astonishment of Joseph and Mary. Simeon then continues his prophecy in a strain fitted to excite still greater astonishment in the minds of his hearers. While the Holy Spirit had presented before the mind of Simeon a glorious vision of a Saviour for the lost, a light for the benighted—with an eye undazzled by the splendor of the vision, he was able to perceive the more special characteristics of the office which Jesus was to fill, and the work which he was to perform. He saw in the future a salvation provided for all, irrespective of race or language. He saw, also, the darkness which overhung the earth being dispelled until earth rejoiced in a noon-day brightness. But he also perceived that not all should be saved nor enlightened; that the mission of Jesus was destructive as well as saving; that while on an errand of mercy, he also recognized the claims of justice, and that while many would be raised by him above the power of sin, and the ruin which threatened the sinner, to a position of unspeakable honor and felicity,—many also will, in consequence of his coming, be involved in deeper guilt, and exposed to more fearful penalties than if he had never come to the earth.

Simeon, after he had presented Jesus as a Saviour for all the world, now goes on to show to the astonished parents, that the mission of this friend of humanity, this Saviour of sinners, while it will result in blessing to many, will also involve many others in deeper guilt and misery.

In accordance with representations given of Jesus in the Scriptures—Simeon has him presented before his mind as a rock—the chief corner stone (Isa. xxviii, 16,) or the stone cut out of the mountain which subsequently filled the whole earth (Daniel ii, 35 seq.) A certain class ascend this stone and gain a secure and happy position, others again stumble over it and are ruined. "He is set for the fall and the rise of many in Israel," says Simeon. Jesus also says, "the stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner, and whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whosoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder (Mat. xxi, 42-44). Peter also says "unto you therefore which believe, he is precious but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, even to those which stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed.

It must be borne in mind that Jesus saves not by a direct exercise of Almighty power, not by destroying the prison prepared for the wicked, nor by adapting the pursuits and enjoyments of heaven for the unholy—but by presenting truth—He saves by enlightening. It is possible to reject the truth, to shut the eye to the light. In such a case salvation is out of the question. Those who thus remain in error and sin, have incurred additional guilt, have placed themselves anew under the tyranny of sin, and of course are in a worse condition than if they had never heard the truth, or had mercy offered to them. It must also be borne in mind that Jesus, though the manifestation of Divine love, yet was never the less a revelation of Divine justice. In the way of salvation which he unfolded, justice and mercy were not antagonistic, but harmoniously blended. Those who were enlightened by Jesus were saved in harmony with the demands of the strictest justice—while those who despised the light were condemned in accordance with the demands of even love itself. How terrible the condition in one who not only has incurred the penalties of justice—but who is deserted in the hour of need, even by infinite love—and whose doom is pronounced righteous by mercy itself. All who have heard the truth as it is in Jesus, must in accordance with the demands of perfect justice be justified, or in accordance with the claims of perfect love condemned. The mission of Jesus has in accordance with the predictions of Simeon resulted in the "fall of many." We can look around our Christian lands and find everywhere manifold evidence of this. In innumerable instances the gospel of Jesus with all the light which it brings and all the blessings which it promises is contemptuously rejected. Myriads live in sin while they know their duty, and are aware of the terrible consequences of disobedience. Myriads have formed the settled habit of refusing to allow what they believe to be the truth to influence their feelings or to guide their lives. Thus guilty, thus depraved, they are victims to remorse and fear, or else the thoughtless and reckless slaves of their vile propensities. Had Jesus never appeared these sinners would have been less guilty, less depraved, and less miserable.

But we may perceive more clearly the reality and extent of the "fall of many" by contrasting the guilt of unbelievers, with that of the heathen who knows not God. Many, who if they had never heard of Jesus would have been no more guilty than the heathen, have by their unbelief committed a crime of such appalling magnitude, that in the great day of judgment even the polluted heathen will arise to condemn them, and it will be more tolerable for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah than for them. The heathen have lived in sin—but they have also lived in ignorance of God and duty. They have never been persuaded by all the eloquence of love to be reconciled unto God. They have never been urged by the dictates of reason and the monitions of conscience, and the pleas of affection to accept of the Divine Son as their Exemplar, Ruler and Saviour. It is reserved for those to whom the gospel has been proclaimed to live in sin, in spite of the clearest knowledge of duty, combined with the presentation of the most peaceful motives to obedience conceivable. It has been reserved for such to reject pardon and peace and eternal life even though God's own Son died to procure for them those blessings—and freely offered them to the vilest of the vile without money and without price. Here is exhibited a degree of guilt and depravity unknown before. We are further more assured that in the day of judgment, Jesus as judge, will appoint to all transgressors that punishment which is meet, and that while the heathen will be visited with few stripes, unbelievers will be visited with many stripes. But on the other hand Jesus has elevated many. He came not to destroy but to save, and his mission has been successful. He has already gathered a numerous people, who, throughout eternity shall adore him for their salvation. He has pardoned many a sinner—and also delivered him from the power of his sins. He has elevated countless myriads to honor and to felicity. He has made his people sons of God, inheriters of the earth and heirs of heaven. We have also every reason to believe that he will elevate many more, that he will continue to dispense his truth and his spirit until the regions of the globe now in darkness shall be enlightened, until the nations now enthralled by error and sin shall be set free—until the whole earth shall be filled with the holy and happy subjects of his kingdom. Furthermore, we are assured that Jesus will revisit the earth even now, that he will assemble all his people, both those who are alive at the time of his coming and those who have long slept in the dust of the earth. All of those he will conduct to his Father's house, all of those he will make peers to the angels—all shall be crowned and enthroned, and forever enjoy the elevation.

MATHETES.

For the Christian Watchman.

Christ's Resurrection--the Christian's Hope.

"Christ is made unto us Redemption."

The term redemption is used in the Scriptures to denote the recovery of all the glories—purity and everlasting life—which we have lost by the fall of Adam, and the actual transgressions of our lives. Man is essentially a compound being—a body of dust, and a soul immortal,—and the inspired writers dwell, not on the blessed condition of disembodied spirits, but upon the resurrection of the body as the true hope of the believer. This is the genuine and glorious "redemption" of man.

Do the apostles aim to pour the balm of consolation and comfort into the heart of the afflicted christian,—to urge on the tardy and slothful ones, in the christian race,—to caution and warn the unruly and rebellious,—to strike the profligate and ungodly dumb with terror? The fact of the second coming of our Lord, in glory, and the resurrection of "the just and the unjust" so immediately connected with it, is the grand argument they wield with irresistable power.

Hence the Psalmist looked upon the resurrection of Christ as the time appointed for his public adoption as the Son of God (Psalm 2. 7), as is shewn by the author of the Acts, when he says (chap. 13. 33), "God hath fulfilled the same (the promise made to the fathers) unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.'" And from this, the Resurrection is called the Adoption, that is the manifestation of sonship "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." (Rom. 8. 23.) The apostle's hope was, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Phil. 3. 10, 11.) Such also was his prayer for the Ephesians (chap 1. 18), that they might "know what was the hope of their calling, and what the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places." Christ in his resurrection is represented as bursting the gates of death, and bearing with him to the regions of immortal bliss, those whom he had ransomed from the power and tyranny of Satan. And then only will his great work be accomplished when he himself shall be revealed from heaven, and the rising dead with triumphant shouts shall rend those heavens with the cry, "Death is swallowed up in victory!"

Reader, that hour will surely come—"The whole creation groaneth" for its approach, and the responsive prayer from the hearts of myriads is, "Even so, Come Lord Jesus!" And then will be thrown open wide the gates of a paradise fairer than that which Adam lost; an Eden more sublime and glorious than that of Earth, will unfold its brilliant landscapes to the enraptured gaze of God's great believing and rejoicing family. For "the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Having borne "the image of the earthy" we shall then bear that "of the heavenly," and a "spiritual body" minister to a spiritual mind. This "vile body," this tabernacle of earth shall dwell in "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then shall immortal, indestructable, boundless life pulsate in every limb and light up every countenance. The eye shall open to view with "angel's ken," and flash with the fires of undying intelligence. The ear shall be attuned to purest harmonies, and receive strength to endure the music of the "everlasting song," as it rises from the lips of "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands," and reverberates from world to world throughout the universe of God. The voice with rarest melody shall speak the language of angels, and sing "the song of Moses and the Lamb." The features shall glow with majestic beauty and unfading freshness through eternal ages, for "the glory of the Lord our God shall be upon us;" "at his right hand is fulness of joy, and pleasure for evermore." LAMBDA.

For the Christian Watchman.

Live to good Purposes.

The persecuting, death dealing Pharisee became the bold preacher of rightsousness to the Gentiles. The blaspheming tinker became the Bonnerges of many an awe struck assembly, and a joyful prisoner of Jesus Christ. The cruel captain of a slave ship melted down into the penman of "Olney Hymns," and a loving tender hearted pastor. The dancing meteor of the race course and ball room was drawn within the orbit of piety, and shed the light so benign and beautiful which disappeared in the grave of Wilberforce. What wrought these wondrous changes? The mighty power of the Spirit and the love of Jesus. These changes were not all suddenly brought about. No doubt there was at first but "faint tokens" of good. But by degrees there was the dropping of bad habits, the cultivation of a self-denying spirit, the treating of inferiors with thoughtful and systematic kindness; the Bible was felt to be "the word of the living God," prayer became an effectual means of procuring wished-for blessing; business, social affairs, family arrangements and personal conduct were made subject to the Saviour's rules. And thus is the work of grace carried on in the heart.

God has benevolently given us bodies "fearfully and wonderfully made," and in order to maintain or restore their vigour we take rest, food, exercise, and medicine. With God's blessing on these means our days pass painlessly; we are strong for labor, and the brave spirit can defend what the powerful arm has won.

God has given us minds with stupendous powers, and we employ means to develope and improve them. With His help the memory brightens till the main incidents of human history are mapped out before it, and great thoughts, like rare flowers, deck and make glad the inward landscape. The habit of observation sharpens, till in the fields, where the reapers have gathered their store, and the gleaner has followed after, he finds ears sufficient to make a sheaf, or sees in the pebble kicked from the path of the peasant, a gem of priceless worth. The judgment strengthens, till from managing his own affairs with skill, he becomes so clear, comprehensive, and rich in resources that he obtains the name of a "master mind."

More, God has given us souls with boundless capacities, and it is our fault if we do not share with celestial citizens the joy of communion with Him. Just as it is the Creator's will that we should take care of our bodies, and improve our minds, so it is also his will that we take care of our souls and make the most of the affections and faculties with which they are endowed. It is His will that we quit the ranks of rebellion and sue for peace and reconciliation. It is His will that we should cast ourselves on His mercy, as revealed in Christ Jesus. It is His will that we no longer turn our backs upon Him, like the prodigal leaving his home, nor look suspiciously with side long glances, as though distrustful of acceptance, but look at Him, as in the gospel he looks at us, and be won back to allegiance by the full faced exhibition of God like compassion and fatherly forgiveness. It is His will that we be born again, and enter on a life of filial obedience, passing our days before him as dutiful children. And having determined on this course,