

SERMON, preached at Trinity Church, St. John, N.B. 24th November, 1840—by the Rev. I.W.D. Gray.

We have been favoured lately with a copy of this discourse, from 1 Cor. xv. 1.—“Brethren! I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you.” It was delivered after the return of the Rev. Author from his visit to England, and we believe, was printed at the desire of its attached parishioners.

It contains, as might be expected, a clear and forcible declaration of Gospel truths arranged under these heads, viz.—The Gospel in all its truth and certainty, in all its glorious discoveries—its high demands—and its transcendent privileges. Our readers, we are sure, will be pleased and edified with the following extracts:—

What is the gospel, brethren! as to its distinctive character? It is ‘glad tidings of salvation through Saviour.’ Salvation is its theme, full, free, everlasting salvation; the immortality of the soul, the resurrection and glorification of the body, the liberation of both from the chains of sin and sorrow, their renewal in the image of a holy God, and admission into his glorious presence above. This is the Gospel theme; and hence its Divine Author in unfolding this subject, is said to have “brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel,” and the Prophet, piercing through the veil of futurity, and catching a distant view of his ministry, exclaims, “How beautiful upon the mountains, are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings, of good, that publisheth salvation.” Observe, however, that the Gospel is not simply the tidings of salvation, but of salvation ‘through a Saviour;’ Redemption through a Redeemer; restoration to peace with God, to holiness and happiness, through a Mediator. This is the grand peculiarity of the Gospel. This is the great mystery, which prophecies intimated, types foreshadowed, Apostles preached, and angels desired to look unto, viz. that “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; that there is no other name under Heaven whereby we can be saved; that He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man cometh unto the Father, but by Him.” It was, evidently, brethren, the chief design of Apostolic preaching and it is still the leading design of every faithful Minister of the Gospel, to preach Christ crucified, to exhibit the cross of Jesus as the only basis of the sinner’s hope to hold forth the incarnate suffering, glorified son of God, as the alone medium, through which we can obtain remission of sin, communion with God, spiritual assistance and eternal blessedness. Hence we hear from the Apostle the wise decision: “I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified;” and again, the noble declaration, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world.”

Nevertheless, brethren, it would be no Gospel to you or to me, unless the proclamation of its mercy came attended with its high demands. “The foundation of God; the corner stone which He has laid in Zion, standeth sure;” it is fixed, immutable and eternal; it is “a sure foundation; the whole superstructure of God’s temple can rest upon it, in perfect safety; time cannot weaken it, eternity cannot survive it, the powers of darkness cannot shake it; yet does the same voice which announces “the foundation of God standeth sure,” most emphatically add, “and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The Grace of God, brethren, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men; why? for what purpose? with what design? “teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.” Can we then come to you, brethren, with the Gospel’s peace, and not with the Gospel’s demands? Can we proclaim liberty to the captive, and omit to tell you of the law of liberty? Can we repeat to you the blessed words of Jesus,

“I will give to him that is athirst of the water of life freely,” but forget to add the solemn assurance, “no man without holiness shall see the Lord;” and the still more tremendous declaration, “the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the people that forget God?” We are “stewards,” brethren! “of the mysteries of God;” and “it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful,” but we should not be faithful, if we omitted these things; we should be unfaithful to God, unfaithful to you, unfaithful to ourselves; for while we were crying peace, peace, where there is no peace, and leaving sinners to perish for lack of knowledge, we should be dishonouring God, ruining your everlasting interests, and subjecting ourselves to the fearful sentence, “their blood will I require at your hands.”

It is a matter of peculiar joy, however, to reflect, that while there are demands and threatenings, which cannot be omitted or softened, out of respect for man, there are promises, “exceeding great and precious promises,” which must not be obscured or withheld, from any mistrust of God. The Gospel must be proclaimed, with all its transcendent privileges. Is it a privilege, brethren, to have our sins forgiven? “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.” Is it a privilege to hold communion with our Maker and Redeemer? “Our fellowship is with the father and with his son Jesus Christ.” Is it a privilege to have God’s spirit dwelling in us? “Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost.” Is it a privilege to have adequate assistance for the discharge of our duty? “My grace,” says the Redeemer, “is sufficient for you.” Is it a privilege to have constant access to God in prayer, to know that our petitions shall be answered? “We may come with boldness to the throne of grace,” and “this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to His will he heareth us.” Or, lastly, is it a privilege to look beyond the precincts of the tomb, to lift up our eyes above the polluted scenes of this world, to those everlasting Hills where the God of glory reigns, and the innumerable company of bright and blessed spirits exult under the light of his countenance? “we are begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.” These, brethren! are blessed privileges; and they are all included in the gospel grant. They form a part of our message to sinners, and they are to be preached to you, in all their freeness, without the slightest reserve or hesitation, as if they were too great for God to impart, or too sacred for man to aspire to.

We cannot avoid adding the concluding application.

Then, brethren, put the question to your own hearts; how stands the case with you in this particular? You have had this Gospel preached to you; have you received it? received not merely as a matter of theory, but of heartfelt experience? received it into the honest and good heart, which under the dew of the divine blessing, can afford it both depth and nourishment, and protection? I beg of you, brethren, and affectionately entreat you to examine yourselves faithfully in this matter. Do not refuse the investigation. Do not defer it. You are hastening onward to the bar of God. A single year makes many changes among us. Some faces that I have been familiar with a twelvemonth ago, are no longer to be recognised amongst you. Where are they, brethren? Where you will shortly be—at the bar of Heaven. Oh! how happy will it be for you then, if you have listened to the Gospel message; listened to it, I mean, with effect. Upon this simple point your destiny through countless ages will depend. There can be no change, no evasion, no substitution of any thing else as an equivalent for this. You may be regular in attending upon forms, and correct and amiable in the eyes of the world; but the word of inspiration must stand. “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath

not the Son of God hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth in him.”

No doubt, my brethren, some of you have received these truths, but can it, can be said of you that they are “the Gospel wherein ye stand?” i. e. in which you are fixed, established, stable? Have you no doubts or misgivings upon these points? Have no changes taken place in your hearts within the last few months? Are there none who were once zealous for God, but are now cold and lukewarm?—None who were once devoted to Christ, but who are now looking back upon the world? Alas! my brethren, lukewarmness cannot make you happy. The world cannot make you happy. It is the Gospel and the Gospel alone, received in its truth, understood in its discoveries, bowed to in its demands, enjoyed in its privileges, that can confer upon you this precious privilege. May the Lord of Heaven impress you with this conviction, and lead you to take your stand for time and for eternity upon that word of the living God, which like its glorious author, shall live and abide for ever.

It is that word, my brethren, and that word alone, which in renewing among you the exercise of my ministry, I desire to make as my guide and counsellor. May God enable me, on all occasions, to speak in simplicity the truth, as it is in Jesus and you to receive in faith, that engrafted word, which is able to save your souls! Amen.

Annapolis, Nov. 23, 1840.

Dear Sirs,

I beg leave to forward you for publication, a copy of the letter with which the Deed for the land on which the church at Dalhousie stands, was accompanied. Testimonials of personal affection must always be highly gratifying to every clergyman; but he acknowledges, with no less interest, whatever efforts are made for the permanent establishment and improvement of that Church which he regards as “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

Your obedient servant,

EDWIN GILPIN.

To the Editors of the Colonial Churchman.

Annapolis, 30th March, 1840.

My dear Sir,

Permit me to hand you the accompanying Plan and Deed of the lot of land on which the Dalhousie church now stands, which from the apprehension that its original extent might be too limited for the convenience of the congregation; and from the probability that the lot to which it originally belonged, might get into the hands of a person unfriendly to the Church, I have increased to the extent of one acre, two roods, and six perches. Allow me to assure you, (that it affords me much pleasure to be enabled thus to contribute my feeble aid to the all-important purposes of true religion, and that the scion which you have planted in the wilderness, may long flourish under your ministering influence.

I am with much respect, your most obt. servt.

(Signed)

JAMES GRAY.

To the Rev. E. Gilpin,

DIED.

At LaHave, on Friday last, Mrs. Mary Hickey, aged 80 years, relict of the late Mr. Hickey, teacher at Lunenburg.