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*If forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.—Psalm 137, 4-5.*

### SERMON

BY THE LATE PROFESSOR CRAWFORD,  
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"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and of all men; so much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."—2 CORINTHIANS, iii. 2, 3.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians, had frequent occasion to vindicate himself from the aspersions cast on him by certain false teachers, who called in question his claims to the Apostleship. Among other arguments to which he appealed in confirmation of the authority of his sacred office, one of the most forcible was the practical result with which his labours in that office had been attended. He was willing to be tried by no less severe a test than that which his heavenly Master had furnished when, having issued His warning against false prophets, He added, "by their fruits ye shall know them." He felt that no other evidence was needful than that which the hearts and lives of his true converts might abundantly afford to prove that the Lord, whose he was and whom he served, had owned and singularly blessed his ministrations.

"Am I not an Apostle?" we find him arguing in his former Epistle, "Are not ye?"—even ye—"my work in the Lord? If I be not an Apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord."

To the like purpose is his argument in the passage before us. "Do we," he had asked in the preceding verse—"do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or

the change that had been wrought in them, dispute his claims to the office he sustained? They were themselves the seal of his Apostleship altogether unnecessary. For, as he adds in the text: "Ye are our Epistle, written in our hearts" (or, as some manuscripts have it, "written in your hearts"),—"Ye are our Epistle, written in your hearts, known and read of all men; for as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ ministered by us."

This was indeed an argument for his Apostleship, the force of which it was not easy to call in question. His faithful converts possessed in their own experience, and openly exhibited in their consistent lives, a proof that his labours had truly been accompanied with the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. Whatever his enemies and detractors might say against him,—as not having "compared" with the other Apostles from the beginning,—as not having been in the first instance nominated, like the successor of Judas, by the voice of the assembled Church,—as having recently been a blasphemer and a persecutor or as otherwise lacking what they may have conceived to be proper signs and credentials of a divine commission,—the faithful Christians at least knew in themselves, and all who candidly observed them were obliged to acknowledge that he had, of a truth, been in their case a "chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles." Whether he had other marks of the Apostleship was to them, accordingly, a matter of comparative indifference. One thing they knew, that whereas they were once blind, they had now, through his instrumentality, been made to see. He had been the means of awakening and converting them; of turning them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And how then could either they who had experienced, or others who had observed,