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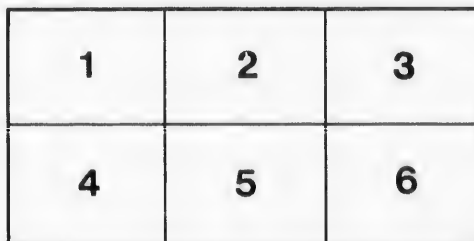
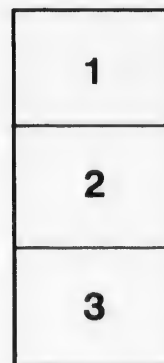
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THREE

SERMONS

ON

DIFFERENT SUBJECTS;

BY THE REV. GEORGE S. JARVIS, A. M.

RECTOR OF HAMPSTEAD, N. B.

AND MISSIONARY OF THE VENERABLE SOCIETY FOR THE
PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM TILL, AT THE CITY GAZETTE
OFFICE, MARKET SQUARE, ST. JOHN, N. B.

1835.

TO THE PARISHIONERS OF HAMPSTEAD AND GREENWICH.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Many of you have, from time to time, requested copies of my manuscript Sermons for private perusal. Others have desired me to deliver in public, for the second time, such discourses as appeared to them likely to be useful. In consequence of these assurances of your good opinion, I have determined to publish a few Sermons for solely gratuitous and parochial distribution. By this measure, I shall have it in my power to comply with your wishes in rendering their circulation as wide as possible, amongst you; and at the same time, by not offering them for Public Sale, I shall avoid incurring unnecessary notice, beyond the sphere of my Spiritual Charge. Not a few of my Clerical Brethren, in this Diocese, have of late years, committed their Sermons to the Press; and on this account, I feel less reluctance than I otherwise should, in doing the same. There is another circumstance which induces me to publish. I have now been several years in this Mission, and have Ministered a great part of that time, amongst seven distinct Congregations. In most of these there has been a very encouraging increase of Communicants; so much so, that you yourselves may possibly be surprised to learn, that the Parish list presents an aggregate of about one hundred and twenty-five persons, who have at various times received at the hands of your Minister, the Consecrated Memorials of a Saviour's love. With this fact in view, I would humbly hope that the Ministrations of our Holy Church have not altogether failed in producing their Spiritual objects. But having the probability of a removal from this Mission before me, I feel anxious that the seed which has been sown may not be lost. I would wish therefore, to give you some parting token of remembrance, and proof of affection. That you will accept these Sheets as such, is the earnest wish of

Your affectionate Pastor,

GEORGE S. JARVIS.

Hampstead, July 20th, 1835.

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SERMON I.

TEXT.—“*And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day.*”—Luke 6c. 2v.

THE occasion of this reproof of our Lord's disciples, by the Pharisees, as related to us in the Chapter from whence the text is taken, was this. Jesus, with his disciples, whilst journeying on some errand of benevolence upon the Sabbath day, passed through certain fields of corn, which laid in his way. And as they passed, the “disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.” By the Jewish law, a traveller did not commit an act of trespass, in gathering of the fruits of any man's lands, if he did so, merely to satisfy the immediate cravings of his hunger. But what elicited the reproof, was that the disciples did this upon the Sabbath-day; when the slightest labour in the preparation of food, was deemed unlawful. And to such an extent was the principle carried, that it was considered preferable to suffer hunger, rather than violate the rule. Our Lord however, justified the conduct of the disciples, and alleged in confirmation of what he advanced, the example of David. David, he said, “when himself was an hungred and they which were with him,—went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat, but for the priests alone.” By this example, Jesus gave the Pharisees to understand, that certain Divine precepts may be imposed for particular ends; but when those ends are not to be attained by their observance, that the duty of complying with them ceases. This rule of interpretation is undoubtedly correct, but it is one

which is liable to much abuse. The Son of Man as Lord of the Sabbath, has not abrogated the duty of observing one day in the week as a day of rest. He must rather be considered as having confirmed it. But he has declared that it is no breach of this day, to exercise upon it works of necessity, mercy, and charity. The Sabbath was instituted for the glory of God, and our own spiritual benefit. And in order to produce such effects, the cessation from bodily labour, is ordinarily speaking, absolutely necessary. But there are times when these ends are better promoted by bodily exertion. In such cases the command to rest ceases, and it is our duty to work. But the danger that Christians then incur, is, when they endeavour to make that appear to be a work of necessity, which is really not so. It shall therefore be the object of this discourse, to show—*First*, wherein the Sabbath may be violated, and—*Secondly*, how that day should be observed.

You are probably aware that the term Sabbath is of Hebrew origin, and signifies rest. According therefore to the primary signification of the word, the breaking of rest, by performing bodily work, is the breaking of the Sabbath in the most literal sense. Hence every one admits, that he is a violator of that sacred day, if he exercises upon it the ordinary duties of his calling, when of a secular nature. He stands self condemned, if he performs upon that day, the stated work of the farm, the usual business of the merchant, or the humbler labours of the mechanic. But many are not equally conscious of their having transgressed to the same extent, if they perform any business which is out of their common routine. For instance, they cannot be persuaded that they violate the day, by setting it apart for the purpose of travelling a journey, and attending to extra work; in the same degree, as if they were exercising their ordinary callings. Others, again, may possibly imagine that they commit less sin in dedicating the day, to amusements of various kinds, to excursions on parties of pleasure. to idle gossiping and vain con-

versation. But in all such cases the Rest of the Sabbath is broken, the spiritual design of the institution is lost sight of, and not unfrequently, more sin is committed, than if the daily work had not been omitted. If six days in the week are occupied in labour, and the seventh, be spent in the manner just mentioned, what time is left for the worship of God, and the preparation of our souls for eternity? Men may also deceive themselves in determining the nature of any work, which they may feel tempted to perform on the Sabbath. They may conceive the work to be one of necessity, and therefore justifiable on that day. And here I will admit that difficulties may sometimes occur, which may perplex the minds of those who possess the most upright intentions. It is necessary in such a case, that the matter be impartially considered. If the work be one which was foreseen, and could by a little management and extra exertion, have been performed upon a week day, it is not a work of necessity. And it is consequently a sin to perform it. Again, if the prospect of gain induces us to do that on the Sabbath, which we would otherwise omit, the work is not one of necessity. It would be endless to enumerate every possible instance, whereby a breach of this sacred day would be committed. The best advice that I can give in all such cases, is, that the matter be referred to God. And that the individual should make up his mind, to act, precisely as he should wish to have acted, when obliged to give an account of his works, at the great day of final retribution.

I now proceed to the second head of my discourse, which is to show how the Sabbath should be observed. This is by far the most pleasing topic to dwell upon. For, although it is a necessary duty in the Minister of Christ, it is nevertheless a painful one, to exhibit the various forms in which sin exercises its power upon our fallen race; and the awful punishment which inevitably awaits those who obey its dictates. The most prominent parts of the observance of this day, consist in the sincere and solemn worship of the Almighty, the

abstaining from all worldly occupations, the exercise of works of mercy and charity, towards our fellow men, and the preparation of our souls for eternity. These are high and noble ends of this day's institution. It is true, that the greater part of these objects must be kept in view, during the remaining six days of the week. But the Sabbath is set apart entirely, on their account. Surely then my Brethren, we ought to prize this day above all. Well did our Saviour say, that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. It was ordained in mercy, and for our own especial benefit. We should therefore consider the day as a precious treasure committed to our care—we should strive to make it profitable to our souls—and if the day were spent in vanity, or, worse than vanity, in actual sin, we should grieve for its loss, and pray that those Sabbaths which may yet remain to us, may be rendered more available, towards the attainment of their gracious ends. The time will not permit of a due consideration, of all the important ends of the institution. The design of the command to observe the day as one of rest, is sufficiently obvious. For how otherwise could the attainment of the other points already mentioned be effected? There are also other reasons for this command, which need not now to be recited. That works of mercy, and charity should be performed on this day, we have no less authority for, than the example of our blessed Lord himself. For on this day he performed some of his most stupendous miracles, in behalf of poor suffering humanity. He healed the sick, restored the maimed to the use of their limbs, and cast out devils. In like manner Christians may exercise their charity, by visiting those who are afflicted, as our Liturgy expresses it, in mind, body, or estate. They may comfort them, and (in subordination to their Minister) pray with them, and administer to their bodily wants. We must also dedicate this day to the more solemn preparation of our souls for eternity, and to the public worship of the great Creator, and Father of us all. Our private meditations and prayers should on this day be enlarged. It is the Lord's

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day more especially, than the other six, and not our own. As we are therefore freed from the ordinary cares and concerns of the world, our thoughts should be directed towards heavenly things. We should reflect upon our past lives, and make a careful retrospect of our actions, as they relate to God and man, in order to ascertain the exact position wherein we stand, with respect to our salvation. If after such an examination, we find that we are advancing in our way to heaven, we cannot be too thankful. In this case, we should pray for continual improvement, and the grace of perseverance. But if we are retrograding—if on the return of every Sabbath we find less inclination to institute such an examination—if sin of any kind becomes more easy to us, and gives us less compunction than it did before—we have great cause to be alarmed. And we should be unceasing in our prayers, lest Satan should in the end, obtain the entire victory over us. Next to private prayer and meditation, are family worship and the religious instruction of our children and dependents. The pious observer of this day, should be more particular in the discharge of these duties, in proportion to the scanty opportunities, which he may possess for such purposes, during the remainder of the week. Private and family prayer ought not indeed to be omitted upon any day. But on Sunday, these duties are less liable to interruption, and can therefore be more sedulously attended to. As the Minister of Christ must give account, for the manner in which he has instructed the people committed to his pastoral care, so must every head of a family consider himself responsible, for the religious improvement of his individual charge. Consequently, he will endeavour on this day, to instruct his children in the first principles of the Christian religion, to make them imbibe an early taste for, and love of piety, and a detestation of all manner of sin. He will also strive to excite in their minds the spirit of prayer, and teach them to consider it as a privilege and a favour to be permitted, to address the great Lord of the Universe. But as it is with the Minister, so it must be with himself. He cannot expect success al-

ways to attend his labours. On the contrary he must be prepared for numerous discouragements. But he must persevere. And conscious of the inability of his own exertions, when unaccompanied with the Divine blessing, he must supplicate, that this blessing may be vouchsafed.

The next, and most solemn mode of observing the Sabbath, is by attending the public worship of the sanctuary. By reason of the small number of the clergy, and the difficulty often experienced in procuring suitable Lay Leaders, it is not always in the power of the people to comply with the Apostle's injunction, that they should not "forsake the assembling of themselves together." On such occasions, their private and family devotions at home, should be more enlarged; and the Scriptures, and if practicable, a printed sermon or other work of a religious nature, read aloud to the assembled household. But if the Providence of God permits of their repairing to his hallowed courts, the attendance should be regular and universal. The command to attend is peremptory, and we have no power to refuse. The Sabbath was retained in the Christian Church, principally for this purpose, and whenever the duty is omitted through insufficient causes, the Sabbath is broken. Experience too plainly shows, to what a degree of wickedness men will arrive at, where the public worship of the Sanctuary is neglected. There is sin enough amongst us, when the duty is attended to; but when neglected, those who were once serious, become careless; those who were lukewarm become vicious; and the vicious, finally, casting off all restraint, pronounce their Maker's name only to blaspheme it; deny his Providence, ridicule the idea of future rewards and punishments, and even question the reality of the Divine existence. To such a lamentable height of iniquity have men arrived at, in those countries where the public worship of the Church has been omitted, for any length of time. Let us then, my Brethren, shun the first beginnings of an evil, which is ever ready to grow worse and worse. But when we prepare to attend the sacred courts,

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we must remember into whose presence we are going to appear. We are going to offer up our homage to the great Lord of earth and heaven; who witnesses every action we perform, and reads the very secrets of our hearts. We must therefore hearken to the counsel of Solomon, the wisest of men. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil." It is a solemn and a serious thing, to appear in the more immediate presence of Jehovah. We should therefore prepare ourselves beforehand, by suitable meditations. We should reflect upon his awful Majesty, his infinite power, and the innumerable retinue of the heavenly host, which continually surround his throne. We should then consider our own insignificance, that we are but dust and ashes, the creatures of a day's existence, polluted with sin, and rebels against that Almighty Being from whom we have received, every thing we possess. These reflections with the Divine blessing, would have a tendency to bring our minds to a proper frame; and we would be ready to say with the prophet, "the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." With such a preparation as this, the sublime service of our Church, when entered upon, will have a blessed effect. When we pray "with the spirit, and with the understanding also," our noble liturgy seems no longer to us, to be a dull unmeaning repetition; but admirably comprehensive, and calculated to express every thing, which a penitent weary and heavy laden with his sins could desire. The form of praise and thanksgiving to the Deity, is also delightful. For the most part, we celebrate the goodness of Jehovah in the language of inspiration; in words which were indited three thousand years since; which were used by prophets and apostles, evangelists and martyrs, who are now singing the praises of their God, in the realms of glory. We hear also in the lessons, the word of revelation proclaimed to us, and afterwards expounded by the messenger of the Lord of Hosts. These are some of the privileges attendant upon the public

worship of the Church, when entered upon with seriousness, and a proper sense of the presence of the Deity. My Brethren can we regret, then, that the most prominent part of the observance of the Sabbath, consists in attending upon, and endeavouring to profit by this worship? And can we wonder, that if we absent ourselves from it through insufficient causes, that we subject ourselves to censure? The honour of being permitted to appear before God is great, and his condescension is wonderful in being willing to hear our addresses. Let us then esteem the blessing as we ought, and every one confess with Holy David, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the House of the Lord."

To Conclude.—You have heard my friends how the Sabbath may be violated, and some of the methods by which it may be observed. I will now ask you, if it be not a more likely way of affording present satisfaction, to make the "Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, and honorable;" rather than by polluting it, in a neglect of its observances? Surely you must answer in the affirmative. For by the aid of unenlightened reason it can be known, that no enjoyment which is attended with a consciousness of guilt, is comparable to that pure and hallowed satisfaction, which arises from the performance of a duty which we know to be acceptable to God. But unhappily for us, we do not always act according to the dictates of reason; but are led into sin, by the violence of our passions, when perfectly aware at the time of the folly of our conduct. Let us then look to God for his Grace, in enabling us to choose aright. And when that choice has once been made, let us prize every Sabbath as if it were our last. There remains hereafter an eternal "rest (or Sabbath) for the people of God." And the former is but a type and a preparation for the latter. If the one be neglected and despised, how can it be expected, that the other should be offered for our acceptance; or if even within our reach, how could it be enjoyed? "Let us therefore (my Brethren in the words of the apostle,) fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short

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of it." On the other hand, if the Sabbath produce its proper effects upon our souls, and we find ourselves at each return of the sacred season, making fresh advances in our Christian duty, we then receive as it were some foretaste of the joys of heaven. We begin to experience with the patriarchs of old, that we are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," and that here we have "no continuing city." And therefore we long for that heavenly country, where there shall be an eternal rest—where the Sabbath of the Lord shall be perfect—freed from the corruptions of this world—and dedicated entirely to his honour and glory. Here, there is much alloy in the delights of the Sabbath. Christians whose faith is the strongest, cannot always overcome the infirmities of their nature ; and they have, not unfrequently, to lament those distractions, and those weaknesses, which prevent their receiving that benefit from the day which they would desire. But in heaven, there are no interruptions to the enjoyment of that pure and blessed Sabbath which there exists. The love of God is unbounded there, and the admiration of his wonderful attributes, furnishes a continual and untiring theme for the praises of his saints. Here, our spirits soon languish in celebrating the praises of Jehovah ; but there, we can experience no higher satisfaction than in the exercise of this duty. New sources of wonder and admiration constantly open to our view, and excite our tongues to glorify his holy Name. Brethren, has the observance of an earthly Sabbath, ever induced you to desire the heavenly ? If it has, and you now neglect that holy season, reflect I pray you, upon what has been said. Resolve without delay to amend your conduct. Remember the words of the Holy Ghost—"To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," and fear lest the Almighty swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest. May the Lord avert this evil—may you attend to the heavenly call—and finally, be accepted through the merits of the blessed Jesus, who died for your sins. God grant this, for the sake of the same Jesus, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be ascribed all praise, power, and adoration, now and for ever. AMEN.

SERMON II.

TEXT.—“ *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three ; but the greatest of these is charity.*”—1 Cor. 13c. 13v.

The words which you have now heard, form the concluding verse of a chapter, the entire subject of which is charity. And as the Church, by inserting this chapter in her Altar-Service of this day,* has in her wisdom prescribed it for the present religious meditation of her sons, I shall endeavour to further her pious intentions, by making charity the theme of the discourse which I am now to address to you. But who can describe a grace of so exalted a nature in a manner suitable to its merits? What tongue must not falter in speaking of a virtue, the exercise of which forms one of the chief and most delightful employments of heaven? ‘Do thou therefore, O most Holy God, be present with thy servant in this undertaking, enlighten him with thy Spirit, and though but dust and ashes, grant that he may excite in the minds of those who hear, a longing after this heavenborn virtue; without which, whosoever liveth is counted dead before thee!’

The contents of the chapter may be divided into two parts. The three first verses declare what good qualities of mind, and desirable gifts may be possessed, and yet leave their possessor without the grace of charity. Those which follow, on the other hand, enumerate certain tests by which it can be assuredly ascertained whether charity pervades the soul or not. And the whole matter is then concluded, in the words of the text, by a declaration of the excellence of this Christian

* Quinquagesima Sunday.

virtue ; an excellence so great, that it is pronounced even superior to the all important requisitions of faith and hope. It has afforded no little perplexity to the minds of some, that charity should be called by St. Paul in this chapter, a greater virtue than that of faith or hope. How it is said, can there be any thing greater than faith, when faith is said to precede, or go before, all manner of works, and is the only ground of our justification, through the blood of the Saviour. And how can charity be greater than hope, which is called in the epistle to the Hebrews, "the anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil ;" or in other words, is to the soul as an anchor to a ship, a sure and stedfast stay thereunto, in all the storms and tempests of temptation ; which is firmly cast, not below on earth, but above in heaven, the true holy of holies, within the veil. But it must be remembered that faith cannot be exercised in the world of spirits, for there it shall be merged in vision—it is here the evidence of things not seen,—there every thing is open and made manifest to the blessed. Hope also must cease with this existence—for hereafter it receives its consummation in fruition and in glory. But charity never faileth—it begins on earth, but is perfected in heaven. Every other gift and grace may cease, but this ; "Whether there be prophecies they shall fail ; whether there be tongues they shall cease ; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away ;" but charity shall survive the shock of time. The world and every thing it may contain shall be annihilated, but charity shall endure throughout the ages of eternity. With good reason therefore has St. Paul declared this grace, to be superior to all others. I shall now endeavour to follow the method pursued by the apostle, in the investigation of my subject. This is to show what good qualities and gifts a man may possess, and yet be destitute of charity ; and then on the other hand to set forth those tests by which its existence may be ascertained. But before I proceed further, I shall give a brief definition of the term itself. The original Greek word is *Agape*, and here signifies a love of God on account of

his inherent excellencies, and also a love of man for the sake of God. With respect to the first subject of enquiry, the chapter commences with these words, "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." In this verse we are informed, that it was a possible thing in the miraculous ages of the church to possess the gift of tongues, or the power of speaking unknown languages without previous instruction in them, and yet to be destitute of charity. And consequently that a man might be inspired of God, in order to promote certain purposes, and still never be admitted into heaven. For except we possess this grace, God will not accept us. If this be true of miraculous gifts, how much more likely is it to be so with those which are only of an ordinary nature. Hence we find that men of the greatest talents and learning, are not always men of the most exemplary piety. Those therefore who possess such talents; should only value them, when they are made subservient to the great interests of religion. Otherwise they cannot be accompanied with charity. The second verse is thus worded, "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." This declaration is still more surprising than the former—that a man should be a prophet and a worker of stupendous miracles, and yet without the grace in question. Notwithstanding, Balaam possessed the former gift, and Judas the latter. The purpose of the Almighty in such cases, was doubtless to demonstrate to mankind, that the validity of the ministerial commission is not affected by the unworthiness of him who bears it. Far be it from God, however, to connive at sin wherever it is found. Still he may think it necessary in his all-wise counsels, to establish the fact, that the sanctity of an ordinance proceeds not in any case, from the individual holiness of him who administers it, but from him only who authorizes its performance. At the same time, it must be borne in mind, that the awful punishment which

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awaits the man hereafter, who should thus abuse his high prerogative, is in exact proportion to that reward, which he would otherwise have received, had his life been conformable to the Divine Will. The faith here spoken of, by which it was possible to remove mountains, was simply a belief that God would so exert his power, when called upon to do so by the individual. It is therefore totally distinct from that faith which is lively and operative in the soul, and is always accompanied by charity. The third verse is thus expressed, "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Here is no discouragement to almsgiving; for the duty is elsewhere declared to be absolutely indispensable. But the verse serves to show, that the act may sometimes proceed from unworthy motives. For instance a man may contribute, to the relief of the wants of the poor, only in order to be seen of men, as did the Pharisees of old. He may also propose some private advantage to himself in so doing. Or he may entertain the vain hope, that by imparting freely of his substance to others, he may on that account live in the commission of heinous sins, and yet escape the vengeance of an offended God. In any of these cases it is evident, that the individual is destitute of the true charity. But we may not so readily understand, how a person may give his body to be burned, that is, to suffer martyrdom, and yet be destitute of this virtue. It is an extreme case, but still it is possible. Instances have occurred even amongst the heathens, of men yielding up their lives in defence, and in honour of their religion. This they have done through invincible obstinacy and blindness of heart. And perhaps they were enticed to do so by Satan, in order to bring into disrepute those martyrdoms which occurred, in behalf of the Christian religion. And in our own country, men calling themselves Christians have sacrificed their lives, in duels, to a vain principle of honour, and in maintenance of what they conceive to be the truth. All such persons are destitute of that charity, without which all other things are of no avail.

I now proceed to the second division of my subject, which is to set forth those tests, by which the existence of charity within the soul may be ascertained. The term itself has already been said to signify, a love of God on account of his inherent excellencies, and also a love of man for the sake of God. But it is evident that such a love cannot exist, unless it is operative, and displays itself by various acts. If we love God, we desire to obey his commandments; and if we love our fellow-creatures for the sake of God, we are willing to suffer many things in their behalf, and to endeavour in various ways to promote their temporal and spiritual good. Thus the apostle declares that charity or love, "suffereth long and is kind—envieth not—vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Time will not permit of our examining each of the tests, with that minuteness which would be desirable. Let us however, take a hasty survey of them. In the first place, we are told that charity "suffereth long and is kind." If a man be possessed of genuine Christian love, he is willing for the sake of peace, to suffer in many things, rather than contend with his neighbours. In so doing, he knows that he is following the example of his blessed Lord and Master. For he, "when he was reviled, reviled not again: when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Such a man is also "kind." He is benevolent to those who are in need of his good offices. And he is so, not so much on account of the return which they may make him, as on account of that love which he bears to Christ, and for his sake to them. On these grounds he is kind even to the unthankful, and those who will return him evil for his good. For in like manner, he may have experienced the kindness of the Lord towards himself. When he was ungrateful, and indulged in acts of rebellion and disobedience towards his Saviour, he received

in return, mercies, and kindnesses, and long suffering, till the time of his repentance. The next test of charity is, that it "envieth not." Envy is a vice which is possessed by those, who are often unconscious of it. It manifests itself in an uneasiness at the prosperity of a neighbour, and his superiority to one's self in public estimation. And it continually tempts the individual who harbours the sentiment, to disparage the object of his aversion, and not unfrequently, to circulate reports injurious to his character. But the man who is possessed of charity, envieth not. If he is himself superior to his neighbour, in what he most prizes, he "vaunteth" not himself, he is not "puffed up," neither doth he "behave" himself "unseemly;" but gives God the glory, and strives to make the talent with which he is intrusted, advantageous to all around him. But if his neighbour be superior to him in any desirable thing, he is not discontented—he considers the circumstance as the dispensation of Providence, and feels assured that whatever may be his own present lot, it is permitted in order to produce in the end, (if it be not his own fault,) the greatest possible good. The apostle proceeds to state, that charity "seeketh not her own." By this I would understand, that it is not a self-interested disposition of mind—that it is not willing to seek its own praise, profit, or pleasure, at the expense and injury of that of others. It is willing rather to share with others, a portion of what it may possess. It is not obliged however, to submit to the wanton encroachments of men. For in such a case, property of no description could be secure. Again, charity "is not easily provoked." The genuine lover of God strives to be slow to anger, and patient under provocation. He does so for his own sake, quite as much as for that of others. He considers that when anger is once excited, a door is opened unto sin. He is not willing therefore, that the injurious treatment of his neighbour, should interfere with the salvation of his own soul. On the contrary, he labours to make the provocation to which he may be exposed, a furtherance to salvation. This he may do, by exercising his meekness

under it, by returning good for evil, and remembering that the indignities which he has offered to Christ are far greater than those, which could be offered by man to man; and that Christ will not forgive these indignities, unless a similar spirit of forgiveness be extended by him towards his neighbour. Charity "thinketh no evil." The possessor of this virtue is not of a suspicious turn of mind. Such ordinarily is the simplicity of the true Christian, that he is continually tempted to weigh the purity of his neighbour's motives of conduct, by the standard of his own. Though fully convinced in theory, of the awful depravity of man by nature, he is unwilling to realize to himself the full amount of wickedness, which may dwell in the mind of any particular individual. When he witnesses the performance of any action, for which a laudable motive is assigned, he is the last to discover the deception. And he must mix for years in the busy scenes of life, before he escapes the danger of repeated imposition. He also "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth." Iniquity as here opposed to truth, signifies falsehood. And in Scriptural language, by falsehood or a lie is often meant, the heathen or any description of false religion; and by truth the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thus St. John designates the Gospel by the latter appellation, in the fourth verse of his second epistle general. The genuine Christian when fully enlightened, can, therefore, take no comfort or satisfaction in any religion, unless its doctrines, the government of its ministry, its ordinances, sacraments, and discipline, be conformable to the will of the Great Head and Bishop of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. In a secondary sense of the terms iniquity and truth, the Christian takes no satisfaction in hearing of, and repeating those false rumours, which are too often circulated to the great scandal of the professors of Christ's religion. On the contrary, his only satisfaction is in hearing the truth, that is, it is his earnest desire to hear nothing advanced in such cases, but what is first fairly and fully proved. When men pursue a different course of conduct, the cause of our holy religion is brought into disre-

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pute—sinners rejoice in the supposed weaknesses and infirmities of the professedly pious, and become more satisfied with their own state—and the general tendency is, to render all pretensions to the life of a Christian, subject to suspicion and distrust. The apostle now concludes his enumeration of the tests of charity, in these words; “that it “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” By bearing all things, is meant, that the charitable person covereth or concealeth all things. Thus in the tenth chapter of Proverbs, it is said, “Love covereth all sins.” This however, must be interpreted with limitations; for there are instances when it is greater charity to reveal another’s sin, than to conceal it. Charity “believeth all things,” it is desirous of believing all that may be said in excuse or mitigation of a fault. It “hopeth all things,” and when no evidence is yet brought forward in denial of a fault, it hopes the best that the matter is capable of, and that the evidence when procured shall prove satisfactory. It “endureth” all things. Even when the fact which is charged is fully proved, charity submits to the evil, and takes no pleasure in publishing it to the world. And this is done, not in order that sin may be connived at, but that its injurious influence and example may be restrained. There are cases however, when it redounds more to the Glory of God, and the welfare of our fellow-creatures, that an evil deed should be publicly exposed. On such occasions, charity pursues an entirely different course. In the absence of such motives, it labours to conceal the evil; but under their influence, it is equally active in exposing it. Indeed in the latter case, there is a want of charity in a man, to cease in his exertions, till the author of the deed be suitably punished, and a warning thus afforded to others against the commission of a similar transgression. I have now endeavoured to demonstrate to you, my Brethren, what good qualities and gifts a man may possess, and yet be destitute of charity; and on the other hand, set forth those tests by which its existence may be ascertained. It remains in conclusion, that a practical application be made of what has been said.

Are there any amongst us, who may have hitherto conceived themselves to have been possessed of this virtue, but are now ready to confess, that they have been strangers to its all hallowing influence? And are there others, who may think its requisitions of too exalted and difficult a nature, for them to aspire to, and therefore abandon at once all hopes of ever attaining to them? But have such of you, my friends, considered that without charity, all other things are of no avail? As assuredly as there can be no justification without faith, so there can be no sanctifying faith, unless it works, that is, evinces itself by love or charity. The exercise of this grace must form the employment of the saints on earth, and hereafter, it shall be the most delightful occupation of heaven. It must be somewhat different, it is true, in its operations in another world; still the principle must be the same as in this. Here the exercise of many of its duties, is attended with sufferings and temporary privation. There, there can be no privation, but a continual interchange of love and bliss. It must be confessed, that the standard of Christian charity, as set forth by the apostle, is a high one. But you must remember for your encouragement, that it is not supposed that all its requisitions can be at once complied with. The grace of charity is a growing virtue. Its beginnings may be small, and yet built upon a correct foundation. But as the Christian advances in life, his charity must increase with his years. He must wax riper and riper in his love to God and man. He may frequently, notwithstanding all his watchfulness, find cause to lament his deficiencies; but if he finds that he is advancing, he need not be discouraged. There can be no perfection in this world, though we are culpable, if we do not strive to be as perfect as we can. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, (we must) press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Brethren may the Lord grant that such may be your desire! May your prayers be directed towards this end!

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And from loving God on earth, may you be translated to heaven; where your love shall admit of no alloy, and where it shall exist, perfect as that of angels, for ever and for ever. God grant these things for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ, &c. AMEN.

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SERMON III.

TEXT.—“*And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*”—Matt. 8c. 20v.

Although the disease of leprosy, is, through the Divine mercy, very seldom permitted to appear in Europe and America, there was hardly any visitation more common than this in the land of Judea. And as it was of frequent recurrence, so there was no malady more grievous, or which so much baffled the skill of the most experienced physicians. Indeed, it set at defiance the art of man, and its cure whenever effected, was ascribed to the power of God. The prophets who had predicted the coming of our Lord, foretold, as one of the evidences by which he should be known, that he should possess the power of healing the lepers. When the leper, therefore, mentioned in the text, besought our Saviour to heal him of his infirmity; it is probable that he regarded him as the Messiah. And on that account, and by reason of that great faith which he thereby exercised in his Divine power, his prayer was granted. The whole passage is thus narrated in St. Matthew. “*And behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him saying, Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, see thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gifts that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.*” The conduct of the leper as here recorded, cannot fail to meet the approbation of all, who inquire into the peculiarities of the case. The individual alluded to, lived a

mongst a disobedient and gainsaying people, accustomed from the earliest times, to set at nought the messengers and prophets of God—to disregard their warnings and admonitions, and not unfrequently, to persecute their lives even unto death. And as men are generally prone to follow the multitude, it required no small exercise of faith in the leper, to condemn the conduct of his countrymen, and recognise the power of our Lord. Those whose good opinion he most regarded in this world, and who had it in their power to do him the most injury, he perceived to be opposed to the truth of our Lord's pretensions, and ready to punish all those who should think differently of them. Consequently, in acknowledging the power of Christ, he knew that he subjected himself to the scorn and persecution of his fellowmen. His faith was, however, full proof against these temptations, and convinced of the inefficacy of all human means to procure his recovery—he addressed himself in fervent prayer to Christ—he fell down and worshipped him, and cried “Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

My Brethren, shall we applaud the conduct of the believing leper, and hesitate to follow his example. Our bodies it is true, are not infected with his disease—but do not the souls of many, labour under a still greater malady—the leprosy of sin? The disease of the leper, could only exert its virulence upon his body, whilst in this world: but the leprosy of sin is unbounded in its ravages. It affords no inward peace to its victim whilst here—it torments him with the agonies of an accusing conscience—and what is still more deplorable, it not unfrequently so blinds his understanding, as to tempt him to regard as enemies, those who would warn him and wish to rescue him from his miserable condition. But what shall I say of its effects in the world to come? The tongue of man cannot describe, the awful consequences of unrepented sin, in that place of retribution. There the vengeance of an offended God is exerted to its full extent—there the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched—there the miserable

sinner without hope of mercy, lives but to blaspheme, and suffering both in soul and body, receives a never ending recompense for all his iniquity.

Inasmuch then as the leprosy of the soul, exceeds in the magnitude of its evils, that of the body; in such proportion should our endeavours be exerted to be delivered from its power. But unfortunately we do not all of us realize to ourselves, that we are infected with this spiritual malady, when we certainly are so. We can perceive the mote that is in our neighbour's eye, but we do not perceive the beam that is in our own. If it were otherwise, and did we possess any thing like an adequate sense, of the awful situation in which we are placed—we surely would not be so careless about our recovery. On the contrary we would think that no greater calamity could befall us—all trials and misfortunes of a worldly nature, would seem as nothing in comparison to this—and our whole care and anxiety would be, to be delivered from so dreadful a tyranny. Let us then inquire who they are, who are infected with the leprosy of sin; and, secondly, by what means this leprosy may be removed. I suppose that it is hardly necessary to state in this congregation, that those persons who are living in the practice of notorious and flagitious crimes, must be comprehended under the above description. Every person must be aware that the habitual drunkard, the adulterer, or the thief, is in this metaphorical sense of the term, a leper. But perhaps all may not know, that a man may sustain a firm reputation in this world for integrity of character, for the uprightness of his morals, the suavity of his disposition, and his natural benevolence, and yet incur the same epithet. And what is peculiarly unfortunate in this case, it is a work of much more difficulty, to convince such a person of the reality of his situation. He entertains a just contempt for those fouler crimes, which are the disgrace of human nature; he abhors them, and studiously avoids the company of those who perpetrate them. He considers himself, as it were, in a superior scale of being.

Consequently, nothing can give his pride a greater shock, and be more humiliating to him, than to be told that he also is liable to this reproach. Every species of sin, it is true, is not equally offensive to God. That is, he does not punish its commission in the same way, but proportions his punishment according to the magnitude of the offence. Still if it be sin, in the smallest degree, and wilfully and knowingly persevered in, it subjects its perpetrator to the wrath of God. The amiable person whom I am now describing, is guilty before God, because however numerous his virtues may be, they are not grounded upon Christian principles. The most pious action which was ever performed by man, contains in it some degree of imperfection, and consequently cannot by its own merit render him who performs it, worthy of heaven; much less atone for those actions which are manifestly bad. Therefore, the action in order to obtain acceptance must derive its efficacy, from some other source. And that is, the firm belief that there is no other way of obtaining eternal happiness, but by the blood of Jesus Christ: and that the benefits of his blood are applied to all those, who testify the sincerity of their belief in its efficacy, by striving to the utmost to fulfil his commands. But the person I am now describing, does not consider things exactly in this light. Whatever honour he may give to the Saviour, he still prides himself upon his own performances; he is not perfectly aware of his sinful state by nature, of his daily and manifold transgressions; neither does he give God the entire glory, when he is enabled to avoid any egregious crime, or to perform any virtuous action. When we look around us, and perceive how much wickedness is committed upon the earth, those of us who entertain a regard for virtue, are naturally inclined to esteem those persons in whom we find the latter quality to exist. And if the virtues of the individual, should unfortunately be built upon a wrong foundation, it is with difficulty and with pain, that we can bring ourselves to confess, that such a person is living at enmity with his Maker. But the thoughts of man are not as the thoughts of God. But (as we were told,

in the beautiful lesson appointed for this morning's Service,*)
 "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways
 higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts,"
 saith the Lord. The Lord from on high, perceives the cor-
 ruption which dwells within the soul, when all that is out-
 ward, appears good, and praiseworthy to men. He knows
 that there can be no purity of heart, where there is pride;
 no salvation without the blood of Christ; no sanctity in that
 soul where the Spirit of the Holy One does not dwell. My
 Brethren, I have now attempted to demonstrate to you, who,
 and what description of persons they are, who are infected
 with the leprosy of sin. You cannot fail to perceive, when
 you reflect upon what has been said, how fully those words
 of Scripture shall be verified, which describe the difficulties
 which lay in the way of our entrance into heaven. "If the
 righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the
 sinner appear." I now proceed to the Second subject of en-
 quiry, which is, by what means the leprosy of sin may be re-
 moved. When we have once brought ourselves to confess,
 that we labour under this spiritual infirmity; and are in some
 degree alive to the awful realities of our situation, we have
 gained one most important point towards our recovery. For
 otherwise, they who think that they are whole, can never be
 persuaded to call for the physician. And our Lord has de-
 clared in positive terms, that he "came not to call the right-
 eous, (that is, they who vainly think that they are righte-
 ous,) but sinners to repentance." Convinced then that we
 are the subjects of God's wrath, we cease to consider sin in
 the light, in which we formerly did. We take no satisfac-
 tion in comparing our own state, with that of those whom
 we think, to be inferior to ourselves in their Christian duty.
 On the contrary, our comparisons are made, between our
 conduct, and that which the Holy Scriptures prescribe to us.
 And we are filled with dreadful apprehensions, when we per-
 ceive how infinitely short, we come, of what the Almighty

* Third Sunday after the Epiphany.

has commanded us. When we find it declared, in the words of our Saviour himself, that men shall give account at the day of judgment, not only for every wicked action, but for every idle word, and thought, we are tempted to exclaim, "who then can be saved"—who shall deliver me from the burden of this death? And if such reflections should induce us, to be more diligent in amending our lives; and we should yet discover, after all our efforts to the contrary, that we were daily adding sin to sin—what sensations must then occupy our minds? Surely our thoughts must be of the most aggravating kind—surely we must feel ourselves to be the most miserable of beings. No enjoyments which this world offers, can afford us in such a case any satisfaction—riches, honours, rank, are but unmeaning phantoms—they come to us to-day, as it were, and to-morrow, they disappear for ever. We experience in ourselves the truth of the Prophet's observation, that "the wicked are like the troubled sea." Like its waves, which weary themselves with tossing, they never are at rest. To all persons in such a situation, I would hold forth the example of the leper. He knew that it was beyond the power of man, to heal him of his infirmity. And, therefore, full of faith, and with fervent prayer, he cast himself at the feet of Jesus, and cried, "Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." His prayer was heard; for "Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean." In like manner, my Brethren, I would exhort you, to prostrate yourselves at the throne of mercy, to confess freely and unequivocally to God your manifold transgressions; and your total inability, to rescue yourselves without Divine assistance, from the consequence of sin—eternal punishment. And, remember for your encouragement, that God is able and willing to save all those who are thus weary and heavy laden with their sins; all who come unto him by faith, in the atoning merit of the Saviour's blood; all who desire to love the Lord, and obey his commands, from the smallest to the greatest; though, through infirmity of the flesh they are unable to do so. To such the gracious influences of the Holy

Spirit will be granted, which shall renovate their nature—the blessings connected with the Baptismal covenant, hitherto suspended, shall then be vouchsafed—and the happy soul freed from its bondage, shall rejoice with exceeding joy. But you must consider, my Brethren, that delay is dangerous ; you must “seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.” If you feel within your breasts, any desire after such a state of acceptance, you must understand that it is the Spirit of God, which excites such desires. And if you procrastinate, and like Felix, say, “Go thy way for this time ;” you are offering an insult to the Majesty of Heaven. You are treating the Great Lord of the Universe, in a manner which you dare not use towards an earthly monarch, if exercising upon you a similar act of condescension. And by the repetition of this conduct, you may finally provoke the Holy Spirit to withdraw his influences from you, and give you up to a hardened and reprobate mind. Close then, I pray you, with the invitation of God, while it is yet in your power—make Him your shield, your buckler, and defence, against those temptations which would seduce you, from the path you should pursue—and, when once you have trampled under foot your spiritual enemies, ascribe not the glory to your own strength, but give thanks to God, “which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Before I conclude, I must put you in mind of one, more feature in the conduct of the leper. When our Lord pronounced his cure, he said to him, “Go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.” Brethren, is there not a gift which is commanded of the Christian, as well as of the Jew, in such a case ? Certainly there is. He must offer up, in gratitude for the mercies he has received, the gift of his soul and body, as a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour to the Lord who has redeemed them. Henceforth, his life must be dedicated to the service of Jehovah. The necessary calls of this world, must, of course, still be attended to. But the dearest objects of his thoughts must be ; to promote the glory of God. And as the leper offer-

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ed his gift for a testimony unto men, of the cure which had been wrought in him; so must the Christian present himself in the temple, at the Altar of the Lord; and there receive from his authorised ambassador, the Blessed emblems of His flesh and blood, as a testimony to all men, of the wonderful things which have been done for his soul. He must also be steadfast, in the undertaking which he has entered upon, inasmuch as he knows, that he may come short of eternal life, unless he perseveres to the end. He is therefore, "unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch, as (he is assured in such a case, that his) labour is not in vain in the Lord." Such, my Christian friends, is the blessed, unspeakably blessed case of the individual, who has made his peace with God. May the Almighty grant that his case may be yours, and that every person who now hears me, may one day be able to rejoice in the Divine love! And thus living to the glory of God on earth, may finally be translated to that Blessed place, where love shall receive its fullest recompense, even the salvation of our immortal souls! And now to God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be ascribed, &c. AMEN.

