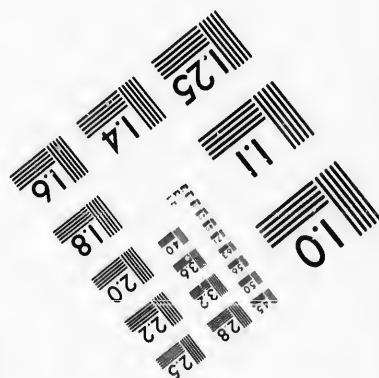
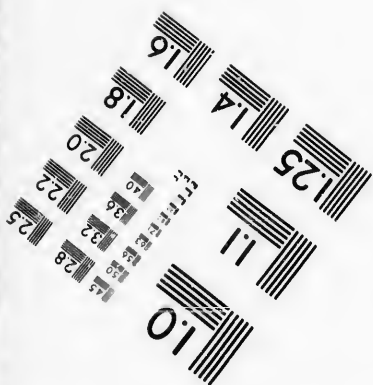
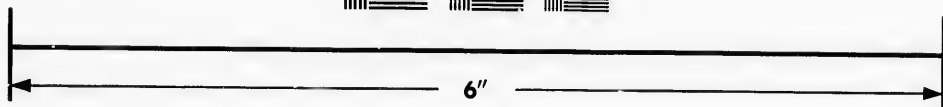
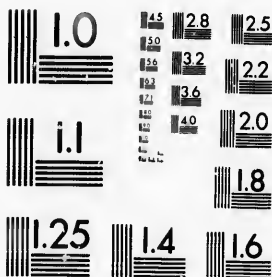


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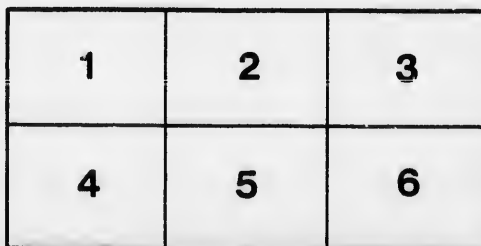
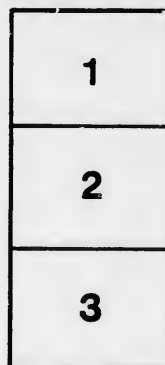
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Obadiah:

A SERMON TO YOUTH,

PREACHED IN THE

WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL,

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND,

JANUARY 1st, 1855,

BY THE

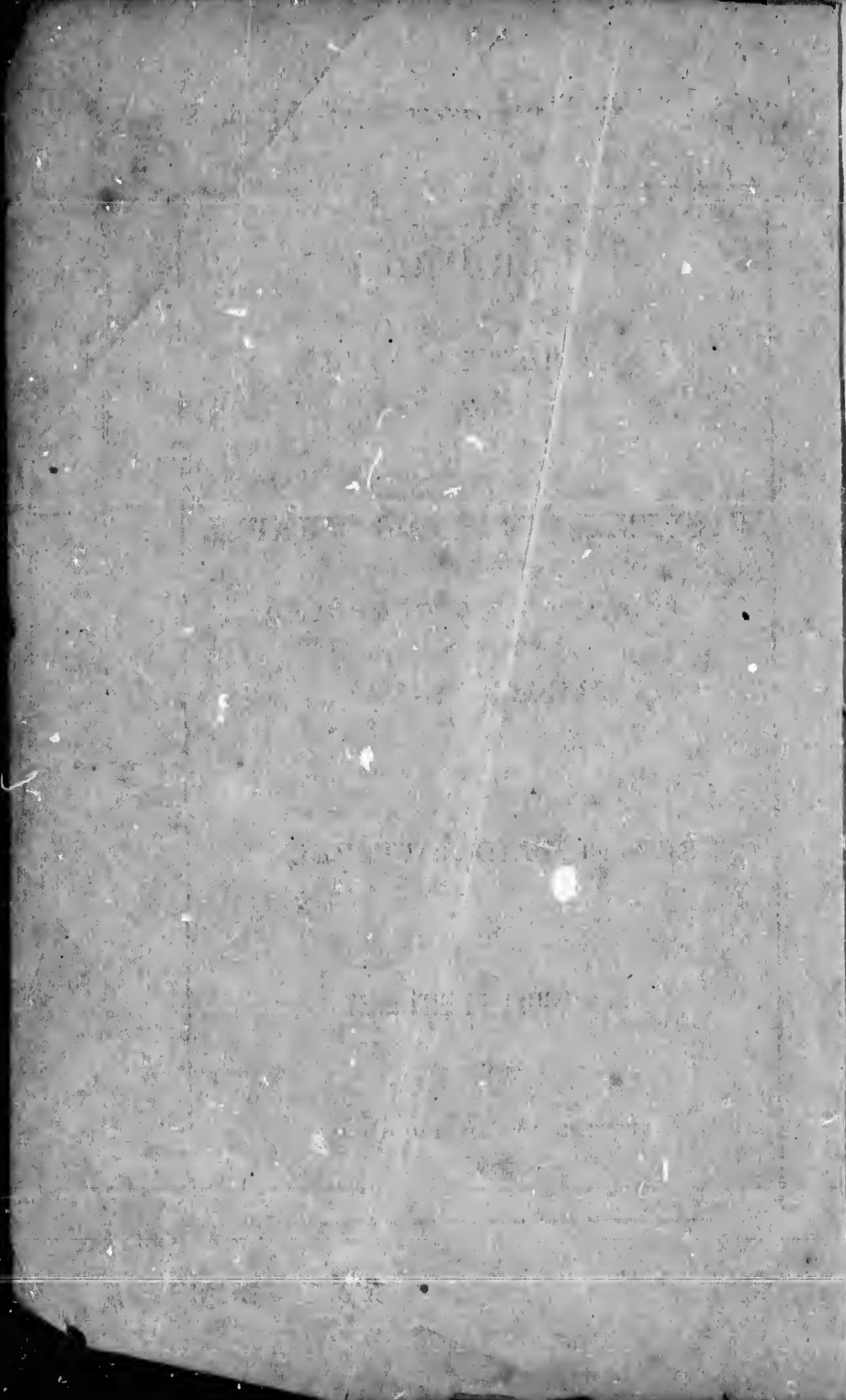
REV. EDMUND BOTTERELL,

AND

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.





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1855.**



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Preface.

THE following Sermon was not composed with a view to its being published. The writer is not by profession an author, nor is he vehemently desirous of the fame, or the rewards of authorship. He leaves these without envy to persons who have more leisure than himself, and he cordially rejoices in their good success. A judicious friend who heard the Sermon suggested that its publication would not be inopportune—and that it might be useful. A few other persons concurred in this opinion, and formally requested that it might be printed. It is therefore given to the public, who are always indulgent to sincere though feeble endeavours to do good. If its perusal shall prove in any degree useful to those for whom it was originally prepared, if it shall animate them and

other young persons in the course of knowledge, piety, and benevolence—and convince them that their present character and future happiness are not the least objects of interest to the writer, nor the last attended to by him, his end in preparing the Sermon for the press will be abundantly accomplished.

The references to HOLY SCRIPTURE have been given and they will, it is hoped, be found correct. These may diminish the beauty of the page to the eye, but they will increase the value of the discourse.

E. B.

St. John's, Newfoundland,
January 10th, 1855.

Obadiah:

A SERMON TO YOUTH.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—

You very justly expect to hear this evening a special discourse, designed more immediately for the benefit of the youthful part of the Congregation. Having authorised this expectation, I shall endeavour by divine assistance substantially to realise it. It is not often that I presume to deliver *Special Sermons*. For this there are two reasons, which the better informed among you will duly appreciate. The frequent discussion of *particular* subjects, might excite in you an un-Christian curiosity, which would be gratified only, by your hearing some "new thing." But novelties in moral and religious teaching are very likely to be false, and would therefore be dangerous. It would also be a strong inducement to myself, to swerve from the fervent and affectionate preaching of the Gospel. Then, whatever other attractions this pulpit

might have, it would want the best of all, which is "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii, 2. The Gospel, pure and perfect, is the exclusive theme of the Christian Minister, as such, and this most deservedly, because it is the standing injunction of his Master, that he is to "PREACH THE GOSPEL," Mark xvi, 15. Christ is therefore disobeyed, and the world is wronged, by the substitution of any facts, or doctrines, for those of the Gospel of our Salvation, which is the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," 1 Tim. i, 11. This precious treasure is at once the best—the loveliest—the grandest—the most effective for all classes of people, and at all times. We wish you, above all things, to love the Gospel—to admire it—to believe it—and to obey it, with an ardour proportioned to its certainty, and its intrinsic value.

But as the occasional preaching of special Sermons, may be both useful and necessary, and the practice is sanctioned by the example of many excellent Ministers, there can scarcely be imagined a season, that is more opportune for them, than on the *first day of the year*, a time when it may be presumed that we are more impressible by subjects which relate to our souls, to God, and to eternity, than at some other times. Nor can there be a more legitimate reason for a particular discourse, than a concern to promote the religious good of young persons. This is simply my design at present. It is well known that many of you cordially approve of it, and strongly wish it good suc-

cess. Let me bespeak your candour in judging of my attempt, and also, your earnest prayers that this labour may not be in vain.

It is a very encouraging circumstance, which I most cheerfully mention, that a goodly number of young persons stately worship with us in this sanctuary. Their attendance is in general regular, and their interest in our religious services, is hopeful in a high degree. Do not think, my young friends, that I shall address myself to you, as though you were judged to be destitute of all sense of the beauty, the truth, and the worth of religion. On the contrary, many of you are very far removed from so culpable, and hopeless indifference. It is my happiness to know that some of you are decidedly and earnestly pious. You are admitted to the communion of the Church, and as the servants and friends of Christ, you are duly found in the lowly, but honourable position of guests at the "table of the Lord." Others of you, it is very probable, are the subjects of such compunctious visitations of the grace of God, as make you almost persuaded to be Christians, Acts xxvi, 28. If you will reflect on the divine source of those convictions, and the great hazard to your everlasting interests of disregarding them, you will surely no longer delay to comply with God's demand, "My son, give me thine heart," Prov. xxiii, 26. It is mournfully possible, that there should be a few of our young friends, who continue as indifferent about religious duty, and Christian privilege, as if

they had no manner of concern in them. If such unhappy persons are not found in our assemblies, it is well known, there are too many of them elsewhere. What a fatal error to keep themselves in a state of alienation from God! What could they do more than this to one who had proved himself their greatest enemy? But He whose word they refuse to hear; whose service they spurn; whose grace they despise; is the God of their life—the Father of their spirits—and the righteous judge of their whole conduct. “If” they “turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow, and made it ready,” Ps. vii, 12.

The observations about to be submitted to you will have an adaptation to benefit equally each of these descriptions of persons. Christians of mature age, will entertain a lively interest in the purpose. My young friends will please to afford me their best attention, as next to the hope that God will accept my work, my most valuable reward will consist, in *your present, your future, and your everlasting advantage.*

The basis of my further remarks will be found in the First Book of the Kings, eighteenth chapter, and twelfth verse;

“I THY SERVANT FEAR THE LORD FROM MY YOUTH.”

I. The whole inspired history of the Israelitish nation is of unparalleled interest. That nation was the chosen people of Jehovah—they were the

selected depositaries of his lively oracles and were for many ages the only true worshippers of the God of the universe—it was to them that the promises of redemption were repeatedly given—it was of them “as concerning the flesh that Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever,” Rom. ix. 5. Our salvation is of the Jews. The period of their national history which is most closely connected with the text is uncommonly attractive; it is fraught with the most important lessons, the study of which would be gratifying in the highest degree. We must not however, expatiate on them now. We shall be able only to make such allusions to the general history of this remarkable period, as will be requisite for the illustration merely of those topics that we may find it convenient to adduce.

The time which is here embraced was a little more than nine hundred years before the birth of Christ. The notoriously wicked Ahab was king over Israel. He had his residence in Samaria, 1 Kings, xvi, 29. His queen was the proud, cruel, idolatrous, and sanguinary Jezebel. Both these personages, are strongly characterized in 1 Kings xxi. 25, “But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” The instituted and elevating worship of Jehovah, was by their means, very generally abandoned for the most debasing and demoralizing idolatry. In this season of great corruption there were many persons in the *rural parts* of the kingdom,

who remained faithful to God, 1 Kings xix. 18. He never leaves himself without witnesses to His Being—and Providence—and Grace. In the *Church* there was one eminent Prophet, who was very jealous for the Lord of hosts—he was that truly venerable man “Elijah the Tishbite,” 1 Kings xvii. 1. In the *Court* there was at least one great saint, OBADIAH ; he, as his name imports, was a “servant of the Lord.”

The words which have just been read to you, briefly describe the character of this good man. They are equally clear, full, and correct. They were in a manner, extorted from himself, by the exigency of his unexpectedly meeting with Elijah, to whom he might have been personally unknown ; and the alarming errand with which the prophet had charged him, “Go, tell thy lord, behold Elijah is here,” verse 11. Obadiah would easily be distinguished by his dress, as belonging to the court, Matt. xi. 8. He would therefore be suspected of being a votary of Baal. He was apprehensive that to execute the message of the prophet would be attended with great personal danger.—Obadiah appears to have judged that Elijah would not be anxious to prevent the peril of such idolators as the servants of the king generally were ; but that he would be very reluctant to expose to an undeserved death, a zealous worshipper of the God of Israel ; Obadiah therefore replied, verse 9—12 “What have I sinned, that thou shouldst deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab, to slay me ?

As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee; and when they said, he is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is *here*. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: **BUT I THY SERVANT FEAR THE LORD FROM MY YOUTH."**

Many of you will not require to be informed that in this beautiful and comprehensive phrase, "the fear of the Lord," THE WHOLE OF TRUE RELIGION IS EXPRESSED. Many instances of its use occur in the ancient scriptures, and the words are also employed by the inspired writers of the New Testament. If therefore we spend a few moments in pointing out their very instructive signification, it may be helpful to our chief design.

The general sense of this combination of words, is to express the character and the habits of one that has a proper *reverence* for the Most High God, and who *rightly manifests* it, by the *conscientious performance of all the duties* which He has commanded. Joseph in the palace of Pharaoh, declared that he was of the same religious principles as his ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and his father Jacob, in contradistinction to the superstitious of the Egyptians, by saying, "*I fear God,*" Gen. xlii, 18. In like manner the faultless and devout character of Job is

described, "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil," Job i, 1. It will therefore occasion no surprise to observe, that the Apostle Peter should enjoin all that this language signifies, by the precept, "Honour all men, Love the brotherhood, Fear God, Honour the King," 1 Peter ii, 17. There are several places in which by this form of expression must be understood a *dutiful reverence for the Almighty*, "Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long," Pro. xxiii, 17. "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of his saints, and is to be had in reverence of all them that are round about him," Psalm lxxxix, 7. Elsewhere the words evidently signify, *conformity to the wise and holy laws of God*, as when we read "fear the Lord, and depart from evil," Prov. iii, 7. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do his commandments," Psalm cxi, 10. Nor is it difficult to select passages of scripture, the connexion of which determines the fear of the Lord to mean, *a serious, and constant engagement in the commanded acts of religious worship*. One such passage is 2 Kings xvii, 36, "But the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, *him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice.*" Another of like import expresses the pious resolution of David, "But as for me, I will come into *thy house* in the multitude of thy

mercy; and *in thy fear* will I worship toward *thy holy temple*," Psalm v, 7. It is agreeable to our sense of the value of these religious habits; it is encouraging to all who cherish them, to observe, that they are associated, as a moral condition, with the experience of the richest, the purest consolations. We are informed of the Churches throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, that their walking in the *fear of the Lord*, was accompanied by their *enjoying* "the comfort of the Holy Ghost." Acts ix, 31.

How forcibly is this amiable and devout character recommended to us, not only by the essential and infinite perfections of God, or the earlier communications of his will to the fathers of the Israelitish race, but especially by his perfected revelation in the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? Our fear of God is greatly sweetened because his terrible majesty as displayed on Mount Sinai, is tempered by the demonstration of his mercy on Mount Sion. It was "through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day spring from on high," his dear Son, "hath visited us," Luke. i, 78. Now, we much more revere God, as our Father in Christ Jesus, than we dread him as a Sovereign of omnipotent righteousness. He is our Father in heaven. Who would not fear him and glorify his name? How "easy," how "light" is the "yoke" of our duty, as enjoined in the Gospel, compared with the burdensome servitude inculcated by the Law? His commandments now are

not grievous, as they were often felt to be before Christ came, but joyous; they are neither inefficient nor unprofitable, and in keeping them there is great reward, 1 John v. 3. This is the pure, the lovely, the peaceful character, which we recommend to our young friends for their attainment. Let me entreat you to give it your consideration, you will be unable to withhold from it your approval. Nor will you deny your obligation to secure it. Do justice then to your convictions on this subject. You are aware that it will be of unknown advantage to you every way. O do not then inflict upon yourselves the irreparable injury of casting off the fear of God. The most unconcerned cannot shut his eyes to the inevitable, the endless ruin which must ensue from its continued neglect. The most calamitous account that we have of the sorrows of the finally lost, is very remarkable, because it assigns as the reason for their being *outcast*,—*desolate*,—*agonised*,—and *unpitied* even by Him that made them, "THAT THEY HATED KNOWLEDGE, AND DID NOT CHOOSE THE FEAR OF THE LORD," Pro. i, 29.

II. We learn from the text, that Obadiah had possessed the amiable and pious character that has been described, FROM HIS EARLY DAYS.

It is impossible not to feel a very pleasing interest in this worthy person, for the sake alone of his goodness. But this sentiment will be greatly augmented by our attending to the intimation, that he

was truly religious, almost from the outset of his life; that he was serious and sincere in the worship of God, from the important period when his personal responsibility to God commenced. I thy servant. said he, fear the Lord FROM MY YOUTH. His words imply that in his youth, and ever since the days that he first became capable of understanding his relations to God, and of presenting to Him a willing service, he had been truly religious. Goliath, the giant of Gath, is said to have been a man of war from *his* youth, 1 Sam. xvii, 33. That desier of the host of Israel was trained to arms. Arms were his early and sole profession. Thus Obadiah was early blessed with the fear of the Lord. One would very much like to know whether his youthful piety were the fruit of his father's example, or the gracious result of his mother's counsels, and the answer of her prayers. It is far from being improbable that his mother was one of the holy matrons of Israel, that she was the first, the successful teacher of her exemplary son.

It is more than likely, that if Obadiah had not thus feared God in his youth, he would not have become a truly religious man in after years. The time of his life was emphatically an evil time. The Prophets of God were denied the liberty of exercising their office in public—the altar of Jehovah was demolished—it was deserted—His people were wickedly oppressed—idolatry was patronised by the court—the royal family lavished vast treasures upon its priests, and the votaries of Bual were re-

warded by preferment. How little therefore is it to be supposed that if Obadiah had grown up to confirmed manhood "without God" in such a time, he would either have been enabled, or inclined, in after years to seek, so as to find Him ?

Are there not equal reasons to fear that those of our young friends who may unhappily arrive at mature age without real religion, may never afterwards attain to its enjoyment ? Think now of the tenderness of your moral sensibilities, the wakefulness of your conscience ; all are favourably and strongly impulsive to the fear of the Lord. The progress of years will surely benumb your conscientiousness and render your feelings dangerously obtuse. The heart becomes callous by protracted impenitence, just as the soil, which in the spring the frost leaves loose, and moist, and soft, becomes baked by the summer heat to an impenetrable hardness. Think of the light of truth, and the drawings of grace, which you must now resist if you remain unconverted, Matt. xviii. 30.— Think of the evil, because ungodly habits which you will form, and which you will be less and less able to relinquish from year to year. How little hope should we have, that one whose manhood had been arrived at whilst he industriously followed the laborious parts of agriculture should subsequently become a clever goldsmith. He would not bring to his new pursuit that steadiness of hand, that delicacy of touch, that acuteness of sight which proficiency in the art demands. How

little should we expect, that one who had grown up in the uninterrupted labours of a common seaman, should afterwards acquire the faculties of a skilful physician? So, do we greatly fear that early irreligion, in most cases, will not be displaced by true godliness in riper age. True it is, that with God all things are possible. It is well that it is so, otherwise multitudes would prematurely despair of making their peace with Him. Is it not also true, that it is only less difficult for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots, than it is for those to do good, who have long been accustomed to do evil, Jer. xiii, 23. Let me then most affectionately congratulate the decidedly pious youth, that you have already chosen the good part. You have evinced true wisdom; you have found the pearl of great price. Let me entreat all others, most earnestly to imitate their example, to know the day of your visitation. Suffer me to say to you in the piercing words of Elijah to all the people, that by his request had been gathered upon Carmel—"How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him, but if Baal, then follow him." 1 Kings xviii, 21.

I would strenuously urge my young friends to immediate decision in this important business, because SINCERE, AND GENUINE PIETY IN YOUTH WILL IN ALL PROBABILITY BECOME EMINENT IN AFTER LIFE. It may be confidently expected that early piety, with proper culture, will be steady—deep—

mature—and exemplary. So it unquestionably was in the case of Obadiah. It is therefore said verse 3. "NOW OBADIAH FEARED THE LORD GREATLY." His religious profession was not a mere convenience, whereby he hoped to avoid some adversity, and maintain a tolerable reputation. He was no time-server. With him the fear of the Lord was a mighty principle, inwrought into his moral being. It was a sanctifying leaven, whose expansive influence extended to all his thoughts, to his whole conversation, and conduct. He feared the Lord GREATLY. It was well for this servant of God, that he was thus consistently devout, and consequently *eminent* in his religious deportment and experience. How otherwise could he have withstood the dangerous corruptions of the times? How could he have escaped the fascinating snares that lay in his path? Had he not followed the Lord fully, he could not have maintained his holy singularity in the midst of such abounding ungodliness, and lucrative idolatry. If his experience of the power and joy of the grace of God, had been more limited, the good impressions, the holy purposes, and the correct habits of his youth would have been as "a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away," Hos. vi, 4. His whole character was obviously formed by his reverent obedience to the will of God. Hence he became

"As an iron pillar strong,
And steadfast as a wall of brass."

It is a character of this high standard that we

wish all our young people to exemplify. It will be to little purpose that you become only nominally Christians. We are deeply concerned that you should joyfully participate the *power* of godliness. Indeed, we desire that you should propose to yourselves, thoroughly to understand Christianity, in its promises, as well as its laws, and its doctrines. "that you may comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge," which gloriously exceeds what *is so called*, "that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. iii. 18—19. In your devotion to Christ why should you not be, not only almost, but altogether such as was the Apostle of the Gentiles? whose life was a life of faith on the "Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us." Gal. i, 20.

You are well aware that even true goodness admits of degrees, that it is by no means necessarily equal in different persons. In the Kingdom of God, some are "least" while others are in a sense "greatest." Whatever may be the advantages, the honours, or the rewards of those who are the least in the Kingdom of Heaven, we earnestly recommend to all of you, to become qualified for the higher felicities of those, who, by their large and humbling self-knowledge—their believing apprehension of Christ Jesus—their obedient love to God—and their intelligent zeal for the prosperity of pure and undefiled religion, are, as it were, the "greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven." Nor do we

see how this most desirable state should be attained, except by your fearing the Lord greatly in your youth. If a man would distinguish himself by the achievements of *a day*, it behoves him to commence early. He must not postpone his labour until the sun is past the meridian. The produce of seed that is sown unseasonably late, is very inferior in quality, and is much less abundant, than of that which was sown earlier, and which was consequently favoured with the genial warmth and rain of the spring, as well as with the mellowing heat of summer. Come then, my young friends, do not allow the short morning of your day to expire, before you apply yourselves in earnest to the great work of making your "calling and your election sure." Do not suffer the spring time of your life to depart, before you sow to yourselves in righteousness—before you sow to the Spirit, in the resolute performance of every Christian duty, and by pursuing every Christian privilege, lest instead of reaping sixty or a hundred fold, the evening of life, the winter of age overtake you, and so *no* fruit be brought forth unto perfection. The possibility of so great a calamity gives peculiar force to the counsel of Solomon, "Remember now thy Creator in THE DAYS OF THY YOUTH, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them," Ecc. xii, 1.

Further, these things deserve your very best consideration, because, thus early to fear the Lord,

WILL BE HIGHLY FAVOURABLE TO INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT. The influence of piety is most auspicious on the acquisition of a creditable, and valuable measure of knowledge. The opinion that we shall form of Obadiah, will be injurious to him, because it will be less correct than is warranted, unless we believe him to have been learned and wise. Had he not possessed more than ordinary intelligence he would have been ill qualified for the high office which he held. In the language of modern courts—Obadiah was Lord High Steward of Ahab's household. In the beautifully simple style of holy writ he is called, verse 3, "the governor of his house." Had he not competent and even commanding talents for that dignity, it is very improbable that he would have been able to retain it, as the king, the queen, and their attendants generally were bigotted idolators, to whom the holy singularity of the steward of the household, must have been a constant rebuke, from which they would desire to be freed. The most striking evidence of the cultivated understanding of Obadiah is supplied by the twelfth verse, "And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee" he said, addressing himself to the prophet, who had desired him to go to his master, and inform him that Elijah was in that place, "that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not, and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee he shall slay me." This speech shows him to have been well acquainted with the most import-

ant subject, the wonderful history of true religion, and its elevating doctrines. He may be thought to refer to the sudden, and miraculous translation of Enoch, Gen. v, 24. He well understood the high source of Elijah's superior wisdom,—it was the Spirit of the Lord—the Divine fountain of inspiration. He confessed the watchful care of God for his prophet. Every word of Obadiah on this momentous occasion, indicates that he was well informed of the character, the works, the providence of God. It must have been an additional recommendation of his person, that his piety was adorned by so much intelligence.

Nothing is more creditable in young persons, than to desire the improvement of their minds.—The surest way to succeed is early to fear the Lord. Any young person who imagines the contrary, is in error. Nor is that youthful Christian walking in the more excellent way, who does not strive to add to his virtue, *knowledge*, 2 Peter i. 5. It would be easy and pleasant to point out a long array of persons, who were originally of very low social rank, who have been raised to the highest walks in learning, by the impulse to mental improvement which they received from their early piety. It would detain us too long now to sketch the history of such men as FERGUSSON—PRIDEAUX—WATT—HALL—CAREY—LEE—and MILNE. Their names will ever be conspicuous in the illustrious catalogue of those who have been successful in the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. With still higher

satisfaction may a Wesleyan Methodist Minister refer to the venerated Dr. ADAM CLARKE, and the Rev. RICHARD WATSON. Their educational advantages, in boyhood, were inferior to those which many of you enjoyed. But by diligent application under the direction of enlightened, fervent piety—they became masters in Israel. Religion discovers and develops the powers of the mind—it introduces to the best company, that of real Christians—it requires engagement in the most elevating exercises—and above all, it creates, and perpetuates, so strong a sense of our responsibility to God—that it becomes, by these means, an overflowing source of the strongest motives to diligent mental culture. Under the guidance of that enlightened conscientiousness which true religion imparts, the industrious youth will be led to invaluable attainments in the various departments of science and literature. Let the youth who thirsts for knowledge truly and seriously fear the Lord, and he shall attain to it. Let every pious youth search for knowledge as for hid treasure, that he may beautify, and recommend his profession to all observers, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job xxviii, 28.

It may also be observed that EARLY PIETY IS THE CERTAIN WAY TO DO GOOD, AND THE USEFULNESS OF THOSE WHO FEAR THE LORD IN THEIR YOUTH. MAY BECOME VERY DISTINGUISHED. Of this position, that servant of the Lord, whose character suggests these observations, is a remarkable example.—

Next to Elijah, whose good service to Israel, was more than that of its chariots and horse-men, Obadiah seems to have been the most useful man in the kingdom. One cannot easily think of a more benevolent, or a more useful work, than is recorded to be done by this servant of God, in verse 4, "For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave* and fed them with bread and water." He provided them with suitable maintenance, "bread and water" in the sacred narrative stand for food in general. These "prophets" were probably advanced pupils in those schools, which had been established by Samuel, and who had not been endowed with the full prophetic commission, 1 Sam. xix, 20; 2 Kings ii, 3-5.

What zeal does this discover? What determined assiduity in doing good to be able, in the peculiar circumstances of the kingdom, to collect, to secrete, to feed, and so to preserve so many men of God.— Here too Obadiah manifests his liberality, he was a generous patron, for it must have been attended with no small charge, in that time of drought and dearth, to provide for the sustenance of so numerous a college. This was a public benefit to the true religion. It was equally a favour to the prophets themselves, and to the cause of God in the land. When the storm of idolatrous wrath was expended,

* See note A in the Appendix.

or it had been brought to an end by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah, as related in the subsequent part of this chapter, verse 36—40, they would come forth to instruct the people in the law of the Lord, and assist them in their worship.— Good Obadiah! What comfort hadst thou in this thy deed of love? Thine too, was the blessing of many that were ready to perish. It came upon thee! What fervent effectual prayers would be offered to God on his behalf? Perhaps, to these prayers it may be ascribed, that Obadiah was shielded from the fatal effects of Ahab's caprice, and Jezebel's malice.

Is it not true that most of those who have been eminently useful have been examples of early piety? The Scriptures furnish us with other instances, as Joseph, Samuel, and Josiah, David and Timothy. The age and the land of our fathers abound with examples—some of whom are fallen asleep in Jesus, others are yet pillars of the Church at home, whilst many are multiplying her converts in foreign lands. Earnestly do I desire that this important consideration, should penetrate to the central heart of all our youth, and there find a lasting abode. We ought to be profoundly concerned for the continued prosperity of pure and undefiled religion. To an extent which can hardly be over-estimated, this depends on the character, the principles, the habits of those who are rising up to take the place of our fathers in Christ, who are gradually passing away.

It is not without painful anxiety, which however is sometimes delightfully relieved,* that the leaders of the sacred cause look upon the state of the Church, and of the World. Sincere Christians, are less cordially united among themselves, than they should be. Their varieties of opinion, cause needless alienation of affection. These divisions are sources of weakness. Some Christians are tenacious of their religious forms, and unconcerned about vital godliness in inverse proportion, to what is respectively due to each. By some the exposition of God's word is conducted on principles, which are subversive of spiritual, holy, joyous piety. Others are too busy or too careless, to rear an altar to God in their own house, or to keep it in effective repair, for morning and evening sacrifice. And then what multitudes, are either worldly or infidel—or lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God? What reasons then have the Obadiah's of our day to look with trembling solicitude to the youth of our Churches, and of our families? It is into your hands that the treasure of the Gospel will soon be committed.—How important is it that you should be faithful men, by whom the cause of Christ shall not only be upheld, and perpetuated, but also that it may be gloriously extended, and its triumphs repeated until the angel's voice shall be heard, in accents as gladdening as true. "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of

* See Note B in the Appendix.

his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. xi, 15. To whom, but to the youth of our day, shall our fathers look for the agency that shall secure this result? O that you could be duly sensible of the great work in this kind which there is to be done. O that you could understand that its execution will require eminent piety, and corresponding wisdom. We wish you to be fired with the ambition of being worthy to be entrusted with so great an enterprise; of being capable of engaging successfully in the glorious work of subjugating *the world* to him, who by the grace of God "tasted death for every man." May each of you cherish, and rightly manifest a consistent zeal for the greater efficacy of the Gospel in the sphere in which you personally move; and that its triumphant progress may be *wide* as the world, and *lasting* as time.

Do not think me tedious, nor that I take an undue advantage of your patience if, from the fulness of my heart I add, in the last place, that EARLY, INTELLIGENT, AND PERSEVERING PIETY, IS THE TRUE PATH TO HONOUR.

Our soul is created capable of glorious elevation. It is the fear of God by which alone it can permanently rise. "He that followeth after righteousness and mercy, findeth life, righteousness, and HONOUR."—Prov. xxi. 21. Obadiah was ennobled in a variety of ways. His godly character—his high social rank—his intellectual resources—and the abundant good which he effected by the influence of his position and his abilities, are so many dis-

dems in his coronet. It is a remarkable testimony to the true dignity, the virtuous greatness of this devout man, that in the emergency of a drought of three years' continuance, his sovereign was unable to find any other that he could securely trust. So that when the nation was reduced to the last extremity, the land was divided, at the will of the king, between these two,—“And Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.” ver. 6. He was a proved man, unlimited confidence could therefore be placed in him. In all but the kingdom, Ahab had raised Obadiah to his own level. Is it not an honour to have all this recorded of him, with so much favour in God's book? Scarcely can we find a more satisfactory or a more instructive illustration of that oracle, “now the Lord saith, them that honour me I will honour.” 1 Sam. ii, 30.

My dear young friends, we recognise in you those principles of our common nature, that impart a sweet and animating relish to the commendation when it is merited, of the wise and good. It is the development of these principles in sanctified souls—and the conscious approbation of Him whose understanding is infinite—and who is glorious in holiness, which give extacy to the spirits of just men made perfect. “In his favour is life.” Psalm xxx, 5. His “loving kindness is better than life.” Psalm lxiii, 3.

There are many who look on a man of serious and earnest religion as being of a mean and con-

tracted spirit; as having a soul that is incapable of dignity, or of honour. Never was there a greater mistake. He deserves no answer who shall say of the ocean that it has no amplitude—of the sun that it wants brightness—of the moon and the stars which God has created, that they have neither beauty nor magnificence; but, a thousand voices will contradict him who shall charge those who truly fear the Lord, with meanness and imbecility. On the contrary, the character—the principles—the habits, which have been here recommended to you, will assimilate you to the most honourable of all men—they will produce in you some acknowledged resemblance to our Lord Jesus Christ, who being holy—harmless—undefiled,—went about doing good. Thus will you become prepared for the accomplishment in your highly favoured persons—of his most encouraging promise, John xii. 26. “If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall my servant be, if any man serve me him will MY FATHER HONOUR.” Yes, and when the false glory of those who fear *not* God, though as renowned in their generation as Pharaoh, or Ahab, or Herod, shall have burnt out like the smoky, fierce, and fitful beacon fires, kindled on hills, the shameful signals of sedition, rebellion, and murder—the crown of them that fear the Lord shall be as the brightness of the firmament, it shall shine pure, serene, and inextinguishable, AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER!! Dan. xii, 3.

Your praiseworthy attention shall now be reliev-

ed. If you would find the treasure that is so greatly to be desired—whose price is above rubies, let there be no delay. O make haste to keep God's commandments. May you all be endued with heavenly wisdom, and with saving grace. Then cleave unto the Lord with purpose of heart. Say unto God "My Father, thou art the Guide of my youth," Jer. iii, 4. Then shall you joyfully prove, that he is "THE STRENGTH OF YOUR HEART AND YOUR PORTION FOR EVER." Psalm lxxiii, 26.

UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST
JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END.
AMEN. Eph. iii, 21.

Appendix.

NOTE A—PAGE 24.

CAVES IN PALESTINE.

“The country of Judea, being mountainous and rocky, is in many parts full of caverns, to which allusions, frequently occur in the Old Testament. At Engedi in particular, there was a cave so large, that David with six hundred men, hid themselves in the sides of it, and Saul entered the mouth of the cave without perceiving that any one was there. 1 Sam. xxiv. Josephus tells us of a numerous gang of banditti, who having infested the country, and being pursued by Herod with his army retired into certain caverns, almost inaccessible, near Arbela in Galilee, where they were with great difficulty subdued. “Beyond Damascus” says Strabo “are two mountains, called Trachones, from which the country has the name of Trachonitis, and from hence towards Arabia, and Iturea, are certain rugged mountains, in which there are deep

caverns; one of which will hold four thousand men. Tavernier, in his "Travels in Persia" speaks of a grotto between Aleppo and Bir, that would hold near three thousand horses. And Maundrell assures us, that "three hours distant from Sidon, about a mile from the sea, there runs along a high rocky mountain, in the sides of which are hewed a multitude of grottoes, all very little differing from each other. They have entrances about two feet square. There are of these subterraneous caverns, two hundred in number. It may with probability at least, be concluded, that these places were contrived for the use of the living and not of the dead." These extracts may be useful in explaining such passages of Scripture as the following "Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made them dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds." Judges vi, 2. To these they betook themselves for refuge in times of distress, and hostile invasion:—"When the men of Israel saw that they were in straits, for the people were distressed, then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits." 1 Sam. xiii, 6. "To enter into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth," became with the prophets, a very proper, and familiar image to express a state of terror and consternation." Isaiah ii, 19.—*Watson's Biblical and Theological Dictionary. Article Caves or Caverns.*

NOTE B—PAGE 26.

RELIGIOUS REVIVAL AT WESLEY COLLEGE, SHEFFIELD.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE WATCHMAN.

Bristol, Dec. 4, 1848.

DEAR SIRS.—It will gratify many of your readers to be informed, that a very remarkable revival of the work of God has broken out amongst the beloved youth in the College at Sheffield. From an early period of its history, this Institution has been favoured with similar visitations; and the fruits of them are adorning and blessing the Connexion, not only at home, but in foreign lands. The present, however, seems much the most extraordinary that has taken place. A judicious and anxious observer says, in a letter which I received this morning, that “the work exceeds anything he ever saw or read of—so quiet—so deep—so universal.” Though somewhat sudden in its commencement, it is obviously the result of the blessing of God upon a long and careful use of scriptural means, and is accompanied not only by a spirit of deep and earnest devotion, but what is always the fruit of this, a general and greatly heightened interest in the word of God. Into any of the particulars of this work, though there are some of thrilling interest, it would be obviously improper to enter; but the fact itself should scarcely be concealed. Of the high character of the College we have reason, as a Connexion,

to be proud; but it is doubly delightful to be assured that there is nothing in its style or teaching in the least incompatible with the simplest and most cherished of those sacred incidents and operations by which our primitive and apostolic Methodism has from the beginning, been characterised.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

JOHN McLEAN.

—*Witchman, Dec. 6, 1848.*



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