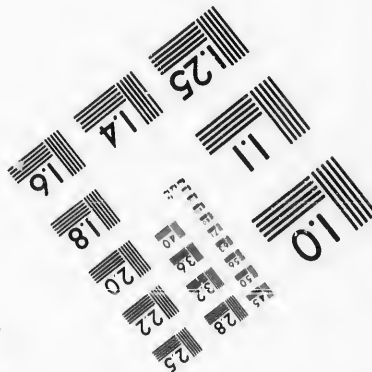
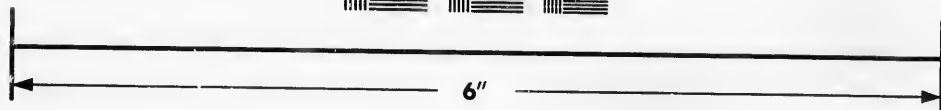
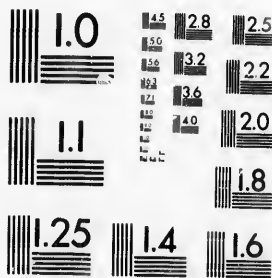


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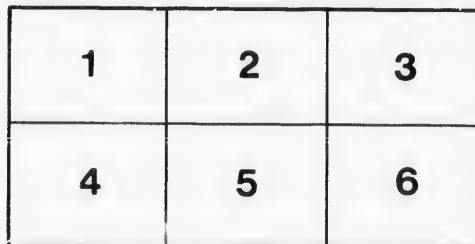
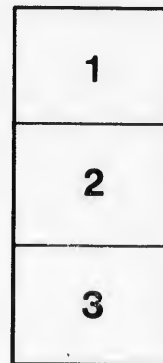
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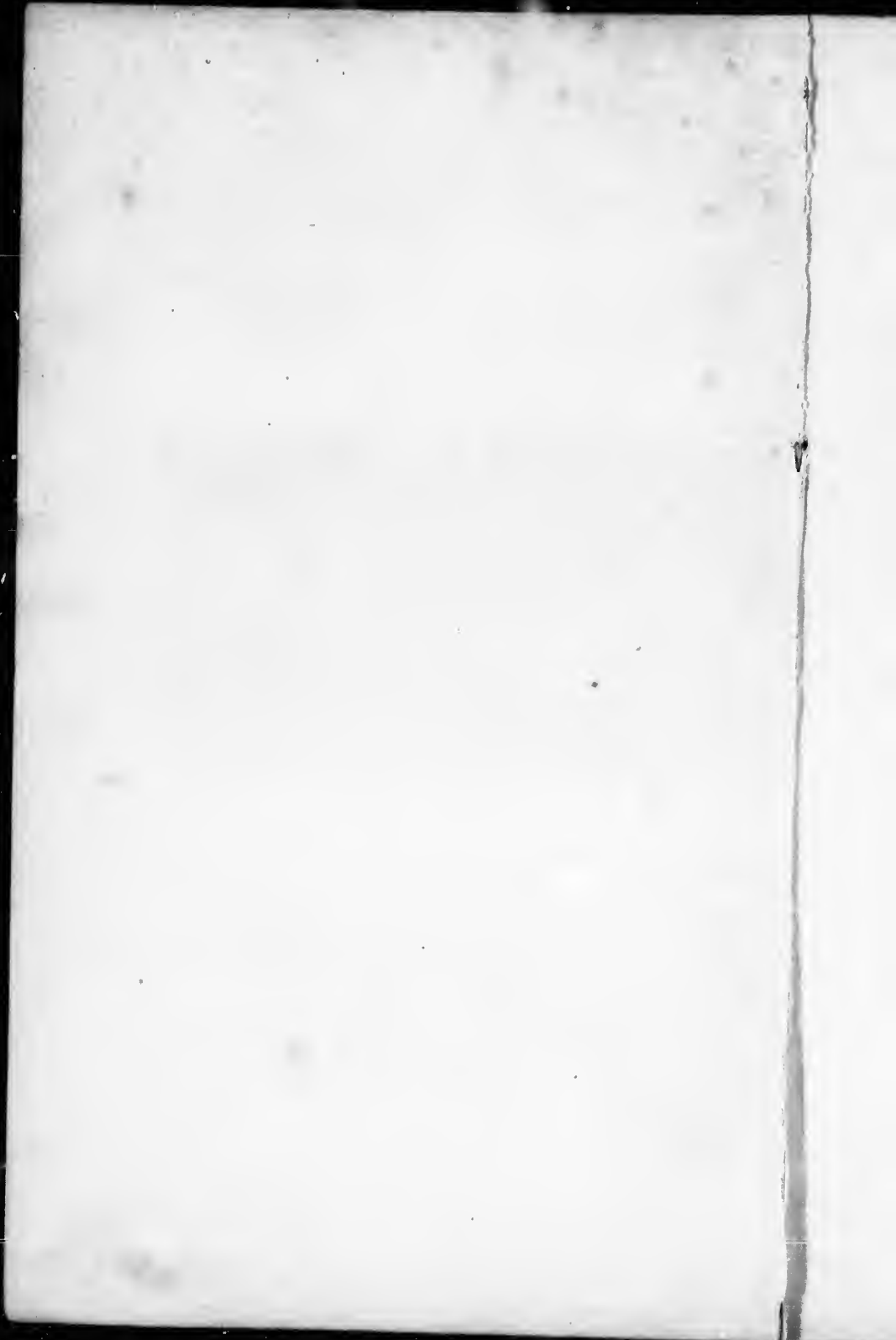
“Love of God and of our Neighbour.”

A SERMON,

BY

THE REVEREND DR. M'CAUL.

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“ Love of God and of our Neighbour.”

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF St. JAMES,

TORONTO,

ON TUESDAY, MARCH 17, 1840,

BEFORE THE SOCIETIES OF

St. GEORGE, *St. Patrick*, & St. ANDREW,

BY

REV. JOHN McCAUL, L. L. D., M. R. I. A.,

Principal of U. C. College,

CHAPLAIN OF THE St. PATRICK'S SOCIETY.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

TORONTO: 1840.

HENRY ROWSELL, KING STREET, BOOKSELLER TO U. C. COLLEGE.

(PRINTED AT THE PATRIOT OFFICE.)

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“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”—MATTHEW XXII. 37.

WHEN we compare Christianity with any system of morality, which reason has taught, we cannot fail to notice the superiority which it has, arising from the universality of its application, its practical efficacy, and its pre-eminent adaptation to the nature of man.—Ancient philosophy, addressing the understanding of the educated and contemplative, endeavoured to reason men into obedience to her Ethical code, and, in the pride of science, scorned to consider the wants of the untutored and the unintellectual. Thus her moral systems, being suited for but few, could not produce an effect on the great mass of mankind; they could influence only those, whose judgment they convinced, and so apparent was this defect, that when one of her most highly gifted sons wished to demonstrate the working of his laws, he did not venture to appeal to real life, but was obliged to imagine their operation in an ideal city.

But—blessed be God for his mercy—Christianity is not thus limited in its application. Although its mysteries give scope for the highest flight, to which the human intellect can soar—although it has depths, whose soundings human reason may toil in vain to fathom,—yet its precepts are so plain, that he who runs, may read. The religion of the Gospel embraces within its all-encircling arms every age—every rank—every grade of attainment or intellect—and the labourer, whose only learning is to gain a hard-earned subsistence by the

sweat of his brow, may feel its benign influences even more powerfully than the deep-read and contemplative Philosopher.

Another feature, which marks the superiority of Christianity is, that it is not speculative, but practical—it does not merely model the mind, but fashions the life,—it disciplines not the faculties, but the principles of action, and at once implants the motive and directs the practice. Its object is not to make its disciples subtle arguers, but faithful doers—its design is not to supply materials for abstract reasoning in the closet, or acute discussion in the school, but to give a rule, whereby men may regulate their conduct at all times and in all places. True religion does not consist in a system of speculative opinions—or a set of high-sounding phrases, but in holy principles and heavenly pursuits. Its followers are not more zealous about doctrines than duties,—they do not prefer angry disputation with their brethren to devotional communion with their God; their animating principle is not a flame, which burns only at periodical seasons, but a constant and steady light, which “so shines before men, that they see their good works and glorify their father which is in Heaven,” the fire of Divine love, which glows within the heart, and burns through the life.

If we enquire whence it is that Christianity exerts a practical influence so far transcending that of any human system, we shall find it to arise from its admirable adaptation to the nature of man. Philosophy may have occupied the head, but it never engaged the heart,—it may have filled the intellect, but it never absorbed the affections—a cold sense of duty—and that attained by the slow process of demonstration—was the very utmost

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it could reach ; in its most attractive form it was but little better than a system for men regarded as intellectual machines, the regularity of whose movements could only be secured by removing all the disturbing forces of the natural passions and desires.

How different the religion of the Bible, which supplies an object engrossing all the faculties and affections of man ! Not satisfied with the cold verdict of reason in its behalf, it appeals to every inward principle—grasping the affections, it takes captive the whole soul, and binds the heart to glad obedience by the cords of love. If we were required to express the sum and substance of Christianity in one word, that word would be “ Love,” God its author is love—by love all its duties are fulfilled.

“ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.— This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

In the text our duties towards God and towards man are distinguished ; we shall consider them as they are thus presented, and endeavour, with the Divine blessing, to point out not merely the reasonableness of these commandments, but the manifestations of obedience to them, which are exhibited in the life.

The relation between a child and its parent is one of the most endearing ties, which this world knows.— There is no one, whose heart is unacquainted with that strong attachment, which binds us to the authors of our existence. Instinct teaches it in infancy, habit strengthens it in youth, and the judgment ratifies it in maturity.

Is there to be found the individual, who does not love to turn back and dwell with delight on the scenes of by-gone days, when he was with loved and loving parents? How fondly does memory struggle to recal the features lit up by that approving smile, which rewarded our little efforts to please—how does each instance of indulgent kindness and gentle forbearance come before our view,—and, oh how bitterly do we regret the waywardness and impatience of restraint which we then manifested—how do we mourn that death has robbed us of the opportunity of making some return for all the love which was shewn to us, some compensation for all our thoughtless neglect and giddy disobedience; how does the heart swell with grateful love even at the distant recollection of the benefits which we have received from a Father's or a Mother's tender care!—If the bond which unites the child to the parent be so strong, that even corroding time cannot wear it away, what shall we say of the closest of all relations, creature to Creator, the very germ of every other connexion? “God the Lord created the Heavens, and stretched them out, he spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it—he giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.”

But God should be the object of our supreme Love, not merely as our Creator, but as our Preserver. To Him we are indebted not merely for life, but for every advantage of every kind which we possess,—that we are in health and in the enjoyment of the blessings which he has conferred upon us, is all the bounty of His preserving care,—that we are happy in the circumstances wherein he has placed us, and in the occupations to which he has called us—that our wants are sup-

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plied, our desires gratified—that we are surrounded by those in whose society we feel pleasure,—that we are blessed with those round whom the heart has twined its fondest feelings,—all—all are the gifts of that hand, which even neglect and ingratitude cannot close. But strong as are the claims of the Lord our God to love on these grounds, even they sink into utter insignificance, when compared with those which are found in the work of redemption. Oh ! what language can express the burning glow of love and gratitude, which should be kindled in every heart by the thought that our Almighty Creator gave his only begotten Son, that “ whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” In contemplating this stupendous mystery, we know not on what topic first to dwell,—so many and so wondrous are the claims, which it urges for all the most intense affection, of which our nature is susceptible. The Lord of Hosts—the everlasting God—the Creator of the ends of the Earth—stooping from the Throne of Omnipotence to manifest love towards men; the overwhelming demonstration of that love, in that it was his only begotten son, the brightness of his Father’s glory and the express image of his person, whom he gave up as a propitiation for our sins; the degradation and ignominy, to which he subjected him, when he sent him from Heaven to Earth, from a Throne to a Cross, from Life to Death ; and all this in unmerited mercy to rebellious and ruined creatures !

Yes—although every work of creation, every dispensation of Providence beams with the love of God, yet so far does the scheme of Salvation surpass every other manifestation in lustre, that they are dimmed and lost in the effulgent brightness of redemption.—

Well may we exclaim in the expressive language of the thanksgiving--

“Almighty God, Father of all Mercies, we thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace and for the hope of glory.”

Let us in the next place consider, what are the manifestations and evidences of being influenced by love to God. These may be determined by observing how affection towards an earthly object is wont to exhibit itself, for there are consequences uniformly following the existence of genuine love.

We seek after, and take pleasure in the society of those, whom we really love ; if we should be separated from them, we delight to think of them and of whatever recalls them ; our anxious care is to comply with their wishes, and avoid what displeases them ; the objects of their love and regard are dear to us for their sake ; no selfish principle influences our conduct towards them ; our sole study is to do whatever gratifies them.

Let us, my brethren, try by these tests the reality of that love to God, which we all profess that we feel, but which, alas ! is more frequently the expression of the lips than the language of the life.

Is your delight to hold communion with Him in prayer—to spread out before Him all your griefs, all your desires ? Do you love to approach Him as a fond parent, assured that He will grant whatever is for your good ; and that if your request is refused, the denial

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must flow from the very tenderness of affection? Do you delight in the language of grateful thanksgiving, and love to pour out the full feelings of a thankful heart? In solitude, is your meditation on Him and His loving kindness? Is that blessed volume, which tells of all that He has done, all that He will do for you, a loved and familiar study? Is love to Him the principle which regulates your life—the source from which your actions flow? Do you perform what He has commanded, and avoid what He has forbidden, for this sole reason—that you may endeavour to please him?—“Whoso keepeth His word, in him, verily, is the love of God perfected.” Yes, my brethren, a life of obedience to the Divine precepts, is the only unequivocal evidence, the only infallible test of real love to God.

But the two Commandments in our text are so united, that obedience to one cannot exist without obedience to the other: “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also.”

The practice of the primitive Church, my brethren, was a living commentary on the precept of their Divine Master, “A new Commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” The principle was so forcibly illustrated in the lives of the first followers of Christ, that even the Heathens were constrained to exclaim, “See how those Christians love one another.” Need I refer to the page of history, which records the impression, which their conduct produced on wondering observers? “Their teachers,” says one writer, “have

acquired the wonderful power of persuading them that they are all brothers, insomuch that the whole of their possessions are given up for the general welfare." "Nothing," remarks another Heathen writer, "has contributed more to the progress of the Christian superstition, than their attention to the poor and friendless.—It certainly is no small ground of reproach, that we should be so glaringly deficient in these things, whilst those impious Galileans cherish and relieve, not only the wretched of their own communion, but likewise of ours."

Such was the religion of the primitive Church, as attested even by their enemies; not a speculative belief in doctrines, exhibiting itself rather in high profession than in holy practice—such was their benevolence, not displayed in the trim phraseology of idle regrets, or unprofitable sympathy, but manifested in solid and substantial acts of kindness—such was their spirit of Christian love, uniting all the members in in bonds so close, that if "one rejoiced, they all rejoiced together; and if one suffered, all suffered together." Theirs was not that spiritual pride, which vaunteth itself of superiority to others; that uncharitable censoriousness, which thinketh all evil, and rejoiceth in iniquity; that irritable zeal, which is easily provoked by the slightest difference of opinion, and presumptuously pronounces sentence on every one, whose sentiments are not the reflexion of its own. No—theirs was that charity, which "suffereth long and is kind, which is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." In short,

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the primitive Christians showed, by their lives, that they loved their neighbours as themselves.

But, perhaps, even now, the question may be asked, “Who is my neighbour?”

Let us, then, briefly consider to whom this term is applicable. Our families and relatives are those who may be called our neighbours, in the highest sense of the word. No one will question the reasonableness of the command in their case; for he who denies to them that affection, which even instinct acknowledges to be their due, not merely offends against the spirit of Christianity, but outrages the feelings of human nature.

Those, to whom we are united in the bonds of friendship, also demand our love. Nor will their claim be refused by any one who knows that endearing sympathy which exists between those that are bound together by this tie—that identity of feeling and almost community of thought, which produces a sweet participation in each others’ pursuits or pleasures—a warm and tender interest in each others’ joy or sorrow. In truth, the love of our friend, who is but a second self, is almost as natural as the love of ourselves.

Again, there are those, whose conduct to us claims our gratitude in return; and to such we should accord the love which flows from that pure and sweet spring, the cherished memory of kindness.

But there is yet another class, who may, with peculiar propriety, be designated by the word whose significations we are considering. They need not the ties of relationship, the attachment of familiar intercourse, or the sense of gratitude to enforce their claims on our affections. That they have breathed the same air—that they have trod the same soil—that they are our coun-

trymen—is sufficient title to the warmest feelings of the heart, and interests in their favour, our kindest affections. They are loved as we love the land of our birth. The strength of this feeling may not be perceived, whilst we are in our native country; for we know not what it is to be parted from it or our countrymen; and yet even there, let hostile invasion be but threatened, and the mere whisper of danger to our father-land will fan into a blaze the latent fire of filial attachment. But when placed on a foreign shore, as we are now, this affection soon manifests its force. It is this, which turns our thoughts so often to the green valleys and hills which we have left; it is this, which brings so often before the mind's eye the smiling landscape, “where once our careless childhood stray'd,” decks it in all the bright tints with which fond recollection can array it—and loves to crowd the picture which memory has sketched, with each minute object, still linked to the heart by those sweet associations, which fling around every tree or brook, the halo of home—it is this, which makes us “in our dreams revisit the seabeaten shore,”—it is this, which has formed, in a far distant land, the Society whose anniversary we now commemorate—it is this, which, uniting in the bonds of brotherhood those whose religious opinions differ, has collected us this day within these sacred walls, to offer, in common, our prayers and thanksgivings to that Being, whom we in common worship.

But—to proceed—hitherto, we have considered the word “neighbour” only in those significations which denote persons, to whom all men should acknowledge that their love is due, even if there had not been a law commanding it. But Christian duty does not end here.

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for "if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners, also, love those that love them." The love of our neighbour, which is taught by Christianity, knows no other limit than that of mankind. Its application, even to our bitterest enemies, is forcibly illustrated in that beautiful parable of the good Samaritan, by which our Lord answered the question, "Who is my neighbour?" and the same Divine Master has, not merely given the express precept, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you," but has also exhibited, by His own practice, an example of the spirit which He inculcates: "Father," exclaimed the Redeemer on Calvary, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." It would be no difficult task to adduce many proofs of the reasonableness of this command; but it must suffice, at present, to glance at the results which would follow, if the opposite practice were directed, and, instead of love, hatred of our enemies were commanded. Need I tell you that the practice of such a principle would tear down, with violent hands, the whole fabric of society—stain our very hearths with the blood shed by revenge; kindle the fires and prepare the rack of persecution; tenfold aggravate the horrors of war; and make this world a field of blood, or a vast charnel-house for the victims of licenced murder? Pursue this subject a step further, and consider what would have been the effect, had the Almighty adopted this rule in his conduct towards us. Does not the mind shudder at the bare supposition? The day-spring from on high would never have visited us—the voice of mercy would never have been heard—the sun would

not rise upon the unjust, nor rain descend upon the evil and unthankful—utter spiritual and temporal ruin would be our portion both here and hereafter.

Permit me now to direct your attention, for a few minutes, to the important enquiry which remains—how this love to our neighbour should be manifested? There are two ways in which love may be shown—in doing good, and in abstaining to do evil. Under the first, benevolence is classed; that sympathetic commiseration, which prompts us to relieve the widow and the orphan—the poor—the sick—and those who are desolate and oppressed. Here the proper manifestation of our love is to go and bind up their wounds, pouring in oil and wine. Nor let it be supposed that we have discharged this duty, if we are even liberal in alms-giving. We should visit the widow and fatherless in affliction—we should repair to the house of mourning—we should not merely supply with this world's goods the bodily wants of the needy and destitute, but soothe the troubled mind, and refresh the wounded spirit; we should “weep with those that weep—have compassion one of another—and be merciful even as our Father which is in Heaven is merciful.” The same spirit of christian philanthropy should breathe through our words and deportment towards every one. We should study to speak of our neighbour in the language of kindness, and mark our manner by gentleness and meekness. If we should suffer provocations, we must exercise “long suffering and forbearance,” and “not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” Have we been injured? We should forgive and forget. Our constant prayer to God is “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us;” let us remember, that

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in this oft-repeated petition we make our forgiveness of others the condition of being ourselves forgiven by God. Thus our duties to our neighbour begin in sympathy for the miserable, and end in forgiveness for the guilty. But love is manifested in another way—in abstaining from evil. The propriety of this is obvious, when we limit its exercise to our relatives, friends, or benefactors, but there are few who recognise its justice, when we wish to extend the principle to those who injure and wrong us, and yet christianity requires that even they should not be recompensed with evil. “Dearly beloved,” writes the Apostle, “avenge not yourselves but rather give place to wrath, for it is written ‘Vengeance is mine—I will repay, saith the Lord.’” But we should abstain, not merely from injurious actions towards our neighbour, but from unkind words or ungenerous suspicions. Oh! if this rule were observed amongst men, how much of human sorrow would be removed! What feuds, what divisions, what quarrels arise from evil speaking and slander! How do men pervert to their own misery that noble faculty of speech, which a gracious God has given them for the increase of human happiness, and the alleviation of human woe! Will you say, my brethren, that that man loves his neighbour, as he is commanded, who is ever on the watch to make sarcastic reflections on something that appears inconsistent or unamiable in his character, —to circulate every slander, and give publicity to every injurious insinuation? No, my brethren, such waters of bitterness flow not from the spring of Christian love.

Another manifestation of love for our neighbour is, abstaining from giving unnecessary offence by word or deed. One of the most genuine characteristics of

Christian charity is a sensitive regard to the feelings of others—not such as to sacrifice right for wrong—but which makes allowance for prejudice and gives indulgence to infirmity. In nothing should this be more apparent than where difference of religious opinions would separate neighbours, where it is a difficult task to preserve peace without compromising principle.— True christian love teaches us to avoid all vain and unprofitable questions, which gender strife, not charity—all disputatious discussions about trifles, which are more likely to irritate the temper than convince the judgment or affect the heart—all bitter censoriousness and uncharitable condemnation. Such conduct will be met with reciprocal forbearance on the part of our neighbour, and thus conscientious differences will not snap the bond of Christian charity.

Mistake me not, my friends, as inculcating that spurious liberality, which owns no difference in religion, and which manifests no preference for any form, because it is equally indifferent to all. Whilst I press upon you the sacred duties of charity, let me earnestly caution you against that ruinous indifference about religion, which is the dark spot amidst the blaze of intellectual light, illuminating the age in which we live. Truly it is a sad characteristic of our times, that infidelity which was formerly professed only by affected philosophers, is now avowed by those who cannot pretend to have been subtilised into sceptics by any process of reading or reasoning, but whose only motives for rejecting what they have not investigated, are often no more than a sordid desire of turning to account the prevailing taste for novelty, the low ambition, which is unable to obtain honourable

distinction, but covets notoriety, or that wild impatience of control, which is the fatal offspring of habitual disregard of authority.

In former days, infidelity had at least the merit of supporting some code of morality, but the free-thinking spirit of our day does not propose to erect any thing on the ruins of Christianity. Its object is not to substitute new laws in place of those, whose authority it denies, but to give licence to unbridled passion to range amidst a moral desert.

Let not, my brethren, let not your faith in the Revelation of God be shaken by subtle sophistry or reckless assertion. The evidences of Christianity are not to be overcome by quibbling cavils; they are not to be set aside by pert sneers. "Round it," to borrow the words of an eloquent writer, "history and philosophy and science have combined to gird the iron and the rock of a ponderous and colossal demonstration."—Secure within that impregnable rampart, with which the labour of successive generations has encircled it, the faith is seated on an unassailable fortress.

From it, she has looked down upon the disastrous discomfiture and defeat of every enemy, that has ventured to attack her. Its bulwarks have resisted the onset of the heathen and the apostate—atheism and blasphemy have launched their missiles against its walls without effect—scrutinising philosophy has failed to discover a breach—it is not now to be undermined by the dark working of rationalism—it is not to be carried by the shouts, however fierce, of assailants, who are neither armed by study nor disciplined by education.

"God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved." "She will not be afraid of ten thousands of peo-

ple, that have set themselves against her round about.”

Let no man deceive you, my brethren, on a subject of such tremendous importance. Heaven and hell are awful realities—they are not the dreams of a disordered imagination—they are not the fictions of priestcraft. Whether men believe or disbelieve, they shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Hold fast then, hold fast, I conjure you, as you value the safety of your immortal souls, hold fast to Christianity; and, whilst you contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints, let your lives show that you are not more solicitous about its letter than its spirit—let your conduct be the unequivocal answer to those who oppose the faith, and prove to them that the religion which they affect to despise, has given you that peace which the world can neither give nor take away—the peace which flows from exercising yourselves to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. Let those amongst you, who have the intellect, the attainments and the time to enquire into the evidences of your belief, be ready to give an account of the hope which is in you—let those from whom the Almighty in his wisdom has withheld the advantages of talent, education and leisure, but yet has given them “the witness in themselves,” trace within their breasts the irrefragable demonstration, which the spirit of God has written there in celestial characters—let all, who are called by the name of Christ, manifest not only by profession but by practice, that they are the faithful followers of him, whose advent was ushered by the Heavenly Host, singing—

“Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men.”

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