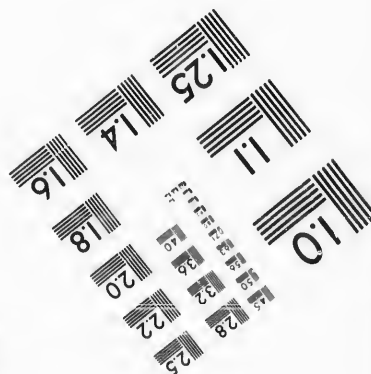
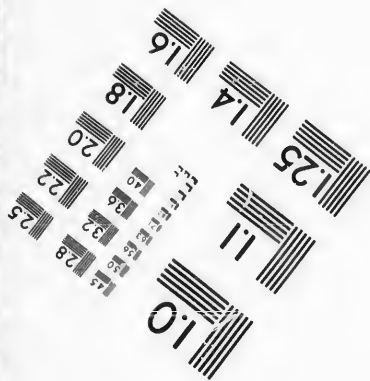
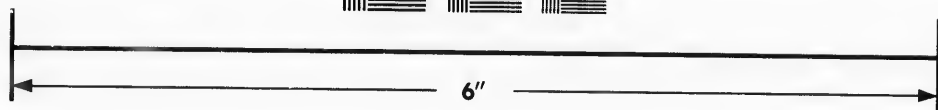
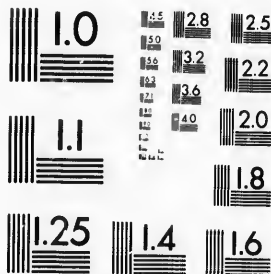


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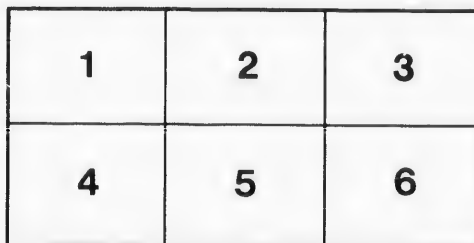
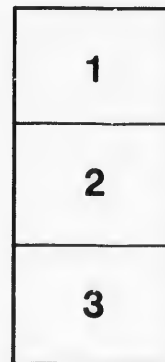
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# Sermon

PREACHED AT THE

PARISH CHURCH,

ST. JAMES'S, PICTOU,

On the morning of 30th July, 1865,

BY

THE REV. W. FERDINAND PRYOR, B. A.

*. A farewell on leaving the Curacy of St. James's.*



HALIFAX, N. S. :

PRINTED BY JAMES BOWES AND SONS,

1865.

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ST. JAMES'S PARISH, PICTOU,  
1st August, 1865.

REV. W. F. PRYOR:

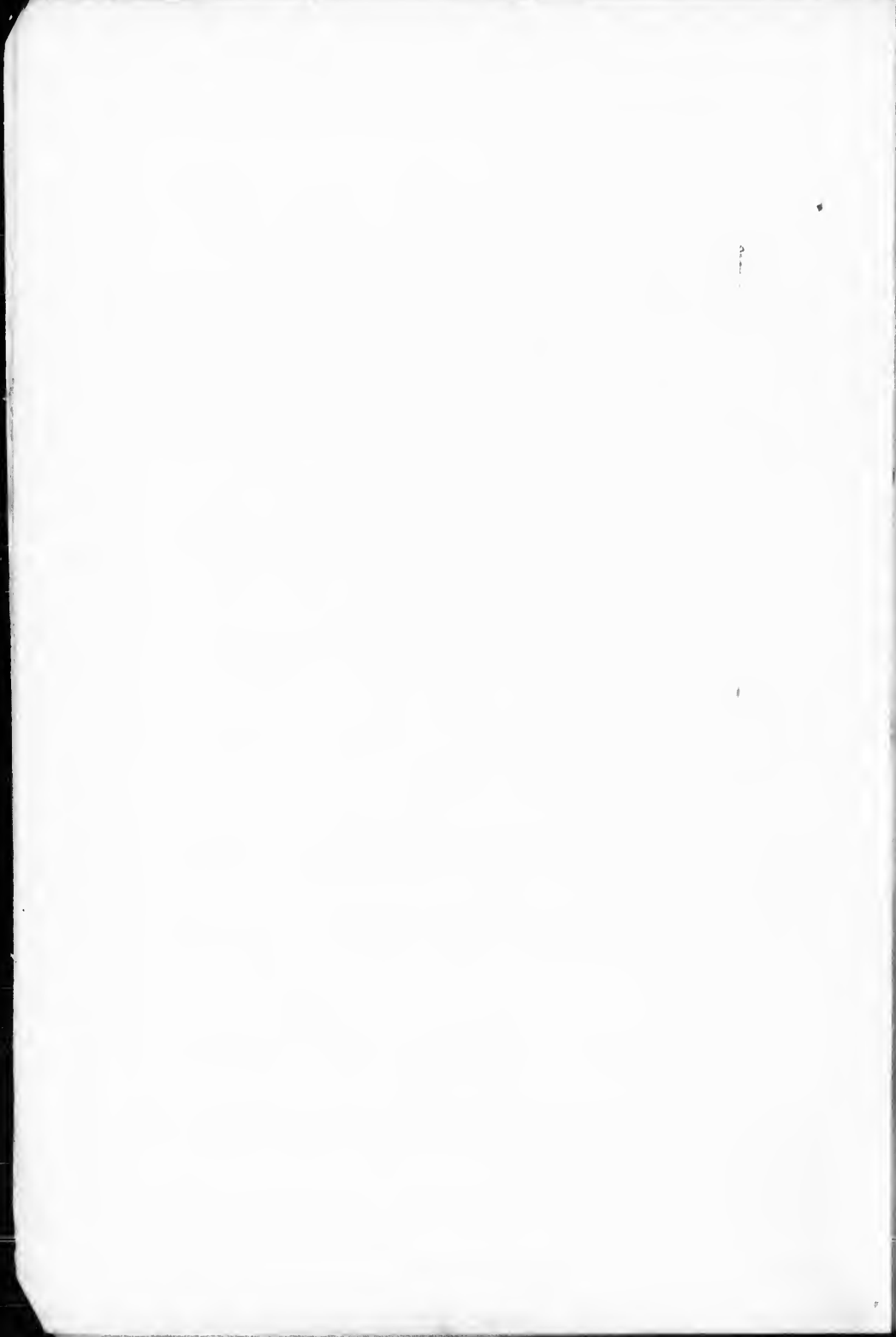
*Rev. and Dear Sir,*

We, the subscribers, having listened to your Farewell Sermon on the morning of Sunday last, so full of earnest words of counsel, of affectionate solicitude for our eternal welfare, and of kindly expressions at parting, beg you will favor us with the manuscript, to have it printed for private circulation. We are induced to make this request to enable those who were not privileged to be present at the service, to read it, and that *all* may preserve it as a slight memento of one whom we esteem so highly; and also, that we may derive instruction and comfort therefrom.

Yours very sincerely,

DANIEL HOCKIN,  
W. H. DAVIES,  
RICHARD TANNER,  
C. DWYER,  
G. P. BOGGS,  
W. NORMAN RUDOLF,  
HENRY ELLIOTT,  
JOHN HATTON,  
GEO. M. JOHNSTON,  
M. MCPHERSON,  
JOHN BAYLISS.

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## Sermon.

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“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”—  
2 Cor. v. 10.

To the truth of this assertion we give our assent on each returning Lord's Day. “I believe in Jesus Christ and that He sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” And again when, in one of our Church's most solemn hymns, the startling truth is more directly stated, “We believe that Thou shalt come to be our *Judge!*” Or, as in the Nicene Creed, where for the third time we profess our firm belief, that “Jesus Christ shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead.” And yet, brethren, notwithstanding all the mouth-profession of belief in this overwhelming truth, how little is it realized, how little does it seem to affect us in daily life! The prospect of any worldly advantage, or of any temporal loss, or (it may be) the disappointment of any much-cherished hope, will far more readily enter our minds and occupy our whole attention, than that judgment-seat before which we must all so soon and so undoubtedly appear. This is, perhaps, just now more especially forced upon our notice by the peculiar circumstances under which we meet to-day within this sanctuary. As pastor and people we are about to separate. And doubtless, as is most natural, this occupies our thoughts, and must more or less influence our feelings. But should it do so

exclusively, supremely! Oh! surely not. Should we be so absorbed with our parting for "a little season" here on earth, as to forget or, at any rate, to lose sight of the great fact that we must all soon meet before the judgment-seat of Christ! Should we not strive, dear brethren, to look beyond the short time of separation to the long time of union?—beyond the comparatively trifling occasion of parting with one another, to the transcendently important hour when, one by one, we must stand before our Judge! "What is life?" God puts the question, and He answers it. "It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Or, as the little hymn so beautifully expresses it—

"What is life? a scene of troubles,  
Following swiftly one by one;  
Phantom visions—airy bubbles,  
Which appear, and then—are gone!"

And what, therefore, should be the inference? Why surely, that for the short time we are here below, we should be ever having before us the end; and daily preparing, watching, praying, that we may "be accounted worthy to stand before the Son of Man." All thoughts, all feelings should be subordinate to this:—What of my state when I come to appear before the judgment-seat of Christ? Before that tribunal "we must *all* appear." "ALL!" You observe, there is no eluding that searching scrutiny—"Every eye shall see Him!" If, therefore, we even should never meet with one another here upon earth again, there is a time, a most solemn time at hand when we most surely shall. And if it is to be a joyful meeting, what must our course be now?—how are we each to live, to conduct ourselves during the short intervening period, that, when the time does come, we may together "enter into the joy of our Lord?"

To answer this question, we can but reiterate, brethren, what (I may most conscientiously affirm) has been the sub-

stance of my teaching among you for the year past. It was St. Paul's assertion on parting with his flock at Ephesus—"Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility, and with many tears and temptations, which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews: And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And, though under somewhat different circumstances, it has ever been my humble endeavour to be enabled to say the same. "Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes! dear brethren, this, as you have had so repeatedly sounded in your ears, must be the one starting point, the great foundation principle, upon which alone we can build the whole superstructure of our preparation for the judgment-seat. If we would then desire to be among the "blessed," we must now, in the very first place, truly repent, that is to say,—think differently of God, of sin, and Satan. than we do by nature; or, in other words,—undergo an entire change of heart,—be "converted,"—"born again" to "newness of life." And, as a consequent of this repentance, or rather, as the root of it, we must have "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,"—we must "look" to Him for salvation, to Him as our one only hope of ever reaching heaven. To believe in Jesus with the heart, to look up to Him crucified, torn, and bleeding for your own sins, is the only sound root from which true religion can spring at all. Until we have this faith, all our religion goes for nothing,—our "form of godliness" is a "vain conceit." "Without faith it is impossible to please God." We are and must be within the flood-mark of His

just and holy vengeance "that will by no means spare the guilty," until by faith we have laid hold on Jesus Christ, felt that our sins have been borne "in His body on the tree," and that through Him alone we can have life. Christ alone must save us. This is the groundwork, the great foundation-stone;—and "faith in Jesus and repentance toward God," the starting points, from which all preparation must begin, through which it must all continue, and in which it must finally all end.

What, then, (may be asked,) are some of the subsequent points in this preparation, arising from and involved in these? The preparation—(you understand, of course)—is simply a constant striving, by use of the means of grace, to grow in tune for heaven, and ready to appear with humble confidence before Christ's judgment-seat. And the more direct question, therefore, is,—what are the means we are to use? Why, there are, first, what are commonly called the private means, as also, secondly, the public means of grace. And to all of us, brethren, God has afforded both.

Among the private,—there is first and foremost, secret prayer. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." We must find time to be alone with God, to hold communion with Him as a child with its parent. We must know what it is to look up to our God in childish confidence, to feel that He is our Father and our Friend, and that without His constant help we can never grow in grace. This is what we may call the first step, the very first means to be used in entering upon the Christian life. Any who content themselves with anything short of this; who have no desire for devotion strictly private; who have nothing to say to God, to which He alone must listen, and feel no impulse to speak

to Him when no one is by, can understand little of real prayer. They may maintain "the form," but they know nothing of the "power of godliness." This species of devotion is inseparable from a state of grace. We can make no progress in our religion without it, no advance toward preparing for the judgment-seat. And connected with this—intimately connected with it—there is watchfulness. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." One must accompany the other. Either without the other would be presumption. If we were to pray for grace and strength to resist the Devil and our heart-corruptions, and then never give the matter another thought, never "watch" nor struggle against them, it would be presumption, nay! the grossest hypocrisy. And were we, on the other hand, to take the task wholly upon ourselves, to strive against sin and Satan in our own strength, this would be equally presumptuous and daring folly. Both then must be used together. We are to pray as well as watch, to watch as well as pray, if we wish to attain "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," and to grow in meetness for His presence. And as another means—another private means of grace—we have the reading of the Bible. "Search the Scriptures," said the Saviour, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." But, you observe, we are to "search" them; not take a merely careless glance now and then, or read so much, daily, just to satisfy conscience; but to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest them;" read them with the one purpose of growing more holy, more like their Author. We must feel and try to realize that God is speaking to us there, and with this solemn thought, put up the Saviour's prayer, "Sanctify me by Thy truth!" Another means of grace, with the importance of which the Lord takes special care to impress us, is—self-

examination. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves." The great cause for this, as you are aware, arises from the deceitfulness of our hearts. Through the medium of our wicked hearts, Satan would very often make us believe that we are almost anything but what we really are. His great object is to make us lose sight of our real state, and get us to slip quietly and easily down the stream, until perhaps it is entirely too late to recover ourselves, and we are his forever. Nothing, therefore, can be of greater importance in the Christian life than to be always on the alert, ever searching and prying into the recesses of the heart. It must be a duty constantly and carefully attended to, a means which must be ever used to keep us close to God. Our daily prayer should be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlasting!"

But besides these private means, God has also taught us to profit by, and has afforded us, the public means of grace. And these must be likewise duly used, if we would have a happy meeting at the judgment-seat. They are, principally, those which the sanctuary affords,—public and united prayer, hearing God's word, and the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper.

To the latter we have so lately had our attention called, that we shall not stay to comment on it. But a few words must be said on public prayer and the hearing of God's word.

With regard to the latter, great things are stated in the Bible about it. It is said indeed to "save" us;—"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." So that we can hardly value too highly the preaching of the gospel as an ordinance.

Three thousand souls were converted by it on the day of Pentecost. By this instrument, this means of grace, God is often pleased to arouse the sinner, and to strengthen and build up his people. And hence, you remember, brethren, the Saviour's oft-repeated exhortation, "Take heed how ye hear!" "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!" As much as to say:—'Do not hear for others; hear for yourself. Listen with earnest attention and with faith, believing that the Lord Himself speaks to you by His ambassador. Listen with prayerfulness. Pray before you hear, whilst you are hearing, and after you have heard. Before, that God would prepare your heart; whilst hearing, that God would bring home His word to your very soul; and after, that the precious seed may take root, and bear fruit an hundredfold.' Now it is but too well known, brethren, that this injunction is nearly, or altogether slighted by most of us; and a word or two must be said about it. Sometimes it happens that we are tempted to find fault with the preacher. His voice is too low or too loud; his manner does not please us; or his language is not to our taste. We are on the lookout for defects, and are far too apt to fasten on any little fault, and make it an excuse for our inattention. Resist this, brethren, by every means; and rather be disposed to find fault with yourselves. Again, it seems to gratify our natural pride and vanity to criticise a sermon, and show how this difficulty might have been better explained, and that doctrine more clearly stated. We find others around us perhaps doing this, and we think that they must necessarily have much spiritual grace and discernment. But there is hardly, perhaps, a more dangerous practice to indulge in, and one to be more earnestly guarded against than this. It is doubtless one of Satan's great devices for robbing us of what would otherwise nourish our souls. As has been well said, "he

likes to busy us, in this way, with the outside shell, whilst he carefully draws away the precious kernel." The ministry of the gospel has been committed to "earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God," says the Apostle, "and not of man." The vessel may be plain; but God's blessing may be with it. The hand that sows the seed may be feeble; but He can "give the increase." "Take heed," therefore, dear brethren, "how ye hear." Listen, not to find fault, but to be fed; and thus you will get many a refreshing meal, whilst others are sent empty away. Look not so much to the hand that brings the food to you, or at the manner in which it is dealt out to you; but look to the food itself, and try to gather from it all the nourishment you can. In other words, look above the messenger, to Him who sends you the message.

But we mentioned another means of grace that God has afforded us by the sanctuary, viz.:—the assembling of ourselves together for united prayer. "My house," said the Saviour, "shall be called a house of prayer." Not merely therefore, you observe, a place of hearing, or a place of preaching, but a "house of prayer." Now, many of us seem often to forget this. They let the one means, entirely, absorb the other, or rather—turn the secondary object of God's house into the first. They go merely to sit and listen, and think that they are all right, so long as they profit by the preaching. But oh! dear brethren, let it not be so with any of you. If it has been a failing with you hitherto, let it be so no longer, if you would grow in grace and in fitness for the judgment-seat. Come to the Lord's house for the special object to pray; remembering His words about it, and that He has added the precious promise, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst." Join in the prayers, not only outwardly with your



voice, but inwardly with your heart. Make it a time of earnest heart supplication. "Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you."

And, alluding to this point, dear brethren, I must, in the solemn act of parting with you, reiterate a word of counsel with respect to your connexion with our Church. Speaking of public prayer as a means of grace,—we all know that there are not a few around us, who dislike our Church, more particularly our Liturgy, our Forms of Prayer; who will perhaps go so far as to taunt you by saying that the Church prayers are "dead men's prayers," that they are a form, and therefore do not, and cannot come from the heart! As a consequent of this, the next step that is generally taken, (or at any rate, left for you to infer,) is, that you should leave and come out of the cold and dead and heartless Church, and go where you will get more spiritual help, a warmer and more brotherly welcome, and more nourishing pasturage for your soul.

Now, as commissioned by God, and His ambassador to you, I would once more solemnly warn and guard you against this most mistaken notion. Surely—even apart from any consideration drawn from the authority of Scripture or the custom of the primitive Church (a simple matter of history from the Apostles' times)—is it not (to say the least of it) a gross mistake to suppose that, because the words of prayer are written down, therefore they must have less to do with the heart? When the pastor who differs from us prays, is it not just as much a form to those who worship with him? Must they not put their desires into his words? Besides, to pray rightly in the public congregation it must be a form—a form in the matter of it, if not in the words. Each Lord's Day our public wants (our wants in common) are nearly, if not quite, the same. The Apostle, *e. g.*, alludes to it when

he says—"Supplication, intercession, and giving of thanks must be made for all men; for kings, and all in authority."

And then,—by doing this, we by no means cast a slight on extemporaneous prayer. There are times when the awakened heart will and must, speak for itself; for no words but its own can express all it feels. But this is entirely different from supposing that extemporaneous prayer is more suitable for public worship, and more profitable for a congregation, than a Liturgy like our own.

Then again,—those of you who attended our few lectures during last Lent, will remember that we found our Liturgy to be purely Scriptural, its framework to be after the model of God's word, its doctrines drawn from and based upon the Bible. And more than this,—that the Church to which the Liturgy belongs, is, in the main, the same to-day as she was 1700 years ago, when England first became a Christian country. She is not resting upon the shifting opinions of man, but upon God's eternal truth. Her's are the "old paths, where is the good way." She honours the Saviour, and leads her children to Him. And therefore, whatever others may say—whatever faults and failings they may find in her—she has been, is, and ever will be, a safe home for all who seek shelter in her communion, and faithfully follow her teaching, as she follows Christ.

Yet, brethren,—after these words of warning or rather, counsel—let me add this other sentence:—Never allow yourselves to speak harshly of those who differ from you. We should deal by others as we would be dealt by. Our attachment to the Church ought to be warm and hearty. We should hold our own firmly. We may feel that those who are not Churchmen are great losers, and that ours is "the more excellent way." We may be persuaded that we are right, and that they are wrong. We may, we must feel

that schism is a sin; that our Lord would have us all to be one; and that those who "cause divisions" in His Church are weakening it, and thereby grieving Him. But still, however decided we may be in maintaining what we believe to be right, let us never speak one harsh or unkind word against those who see not as we see. If they love the Saviour, let us love them for His sake; and let us earnestly pray that the time may speedily come, when Christ's people shall be all one; when "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim;" but there shall be "one fold and one Shepherd."

Now, you remember, dear brethren, the reason for which I have alluded to all these points. It is—because "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ;" because, when we do appear, we are to give an account of "the things done in the body;" and because, if we wish to render that account "with joy and not with grief," we must now (during the short interval that remains) be taking the proper means of preparing for it. Again, it has also been my object to thus try and draw our better and more solemn feelings from the present parting scene to our future appearing before the Saviour. And now, as another thought to strengthen this,—I mean, to make us think less of parting and more of meeting,—let me remind you, dear brethren, that this sudden and unlooked-for termination of our connexion with each other is not your doing, nor my doing, nor the doing of any other party, but the work of God. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. iv.) "Thou didst it!" is the history of the whole affair. His purposes none can change—His counsels none can resist! And oh! brethren, what a blessed truth, to know that "The Lord reigneth!" To feel that there is no chance or accident with God! How cheering to know that all that befalls us and ours is thus ordered by a

covenant God!—every minute circumstance of our lot—appointing the bounds of our habitation—meting out every drop in the cup of life—arranging what by us are called its “vicissitudes”—decreeing all its trials, and at last, as the great Proprietor of life, revoking the lease of existence when its allotted term has expired! Yes! surely it would and ought to keep the mind from its guilty proneness to brood and fret over second causes, if this simple truth were but fully realized—that all that befalls us are integral parts in a stupendous plan of wisdom—that there is no crossing or thwarting the designs and dealings of God; for that there is a “needs be” in them all, and that they come from the hand of a Father that ordereth all things wisely, and “doeth all things well.”

Finally, then, dear brethren, (for the end must come,) allow me, as your servant who has been humbly ministering to you the gospel of Christ, to personally address you just a few more words. I could never part without once more publicly acknowledging my debt of gratitude to you, both individually and as a congregation, for your most unmerited hospitality, your forbearance and kindness of every possible description during our year's acquaintance. You have borne with all my failings and my shortcomings, overlooked all the feebleness and inexperience of my youth, encouraged and upheld me when necessity required, and, more than all, have ever manifested toward me the most constant and affectionate attachment. Thus you have been the means, under God, of giving his feeble and most undeserving servant such encouragement and strength as shall never lose its weight throughout all my life. And my earnest, heartfelt prayer, is—that the same “God of all grace” may be found by each individual of you, as your reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, who “will never leave you nor forsake you,” if you put your trust in Him.

Yet, a word or two of still greater importance, that I feel, should be the last to be left sounding in your ears. It is,—that there are, and there can be, but two classes of persons now before me,—the converted and the unconverted. To you, my poor fellow-sinners, who have never yet experienced an entire inward change, and are not new creatures in Christ Jesus, who love the world and the things of the world, whose treasure and whose hearts are in it,—once more let this voice reach your ears, and oh! may the Holy Spirit send it home to your inmost souls—“Turn ye, turn ye.” “Look unto me and be ye saved.” Hear once more the gracious declaration of your God—“As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die!” Oh! how fearful is the very supposition, that when we meet again, it may be before the judgment-seat, and then that, instead of being my joy, I am compelled to witness against you, and when I have to speak of you to say, “Time after time I preached thy word to them, I warned them, I entreated them, I laid thy promises, O my God, before them, I made known thy boundless love to them and thy threatenings, but they would not hear!” Many of you (let me speak plainly) are, I fear, walking still in the ways of ruin; your conduct has not that which stamps the Christian. Once more I set before you Christ and His salvation: once more I invite you to come to Him: once more I tell you the Heavenly Father is ready to receive you, and Jesus to save you, and the Spirit to sanctify.

May God have mercy upon your souls, and, by His Spirit, lead you to repentance for Christ Jesus' sake!

And lastly, a word to you, beloved in the Lord, to whom sin is grievous and Christ is precious, whose hearts have been converted, and who are now striving to live for that

dear Saviour who has bought you with His blood. "May grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied unto you." May the Lord Himself hold up your goings in His paths, and enable you to "fight the good fight of faith." Always bear in mind the judgment-seat of Christ, and the day you must stand before it. And let the hope of its approach cheer you for the onset against your corruptions, and animate you in your assault upon all remains of worldliness, ill-temper, selfishness, uncharitableness, and the accompanying host of ills to which you once were willing slaves. Yes! let the thoughts upon which we have now been dwelling, drive you to greater earnestness, to a more firm resolve against everything that defiles you, against every inconsistency, every sinful imagination, every idle word, every ungodly deed to which the enemy would tempt you. Beware of spiritual sloth; beware of boasting, because you have girded on your harness, as if you were now putting it off; beware of thinking, that, because you have entered upon the Christian warfare, the battle is already fought and the victory won. You have enlisted under the Captain of your salvation; and in His strength you must go against all the corruptions of your sinful flesh, all the temptations of a wicked world, and all the craft and malice of the Devil, even to the very last breath you draw. But you know the promise—"If God be for us, who can be against us?" It will all soon be over; and then we shall together sing throughout eternity the praises of Him "who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His Father."

Once more, then, dear brethren,—both converted and unconverted, to one and all of you,—I would say in the words of the Apostle—"Farewell! Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." Amen.

