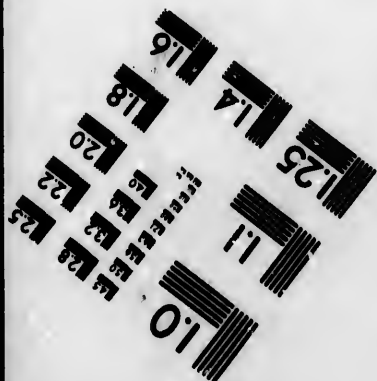
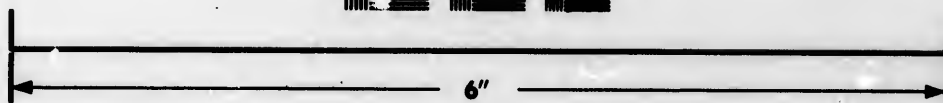
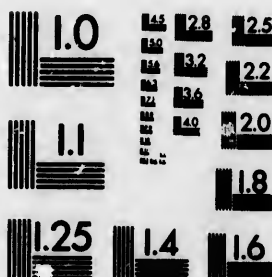


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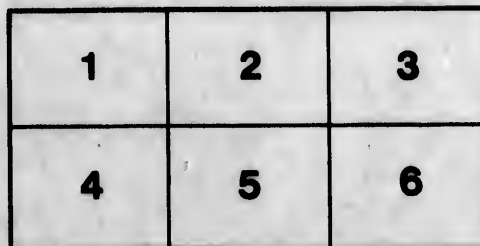
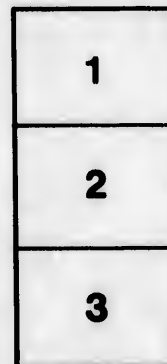
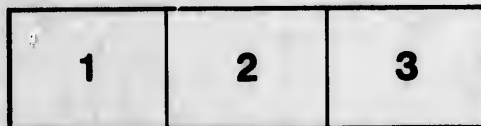
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BY

A CLERGYMAN

OF THE

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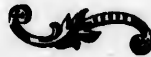
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THESE Sermons were preached in many churches in Ontario and Quebec during the past fifty years, and the Author now publishes them in the hope that, after he has entered into rest, his words may yet influence some for good.

By way of apology, the Author would say that these sermons were prepared for the publisher by another Clergyman, as he (the Author) was too ill to give the matter any attention whatever. This will account for most of the errors and discrepancies found therein.



[illegible]

OPENING THE EYES OF THE BLIND.

St. Mark, 10th Chapter, 46th Verse.

"And they came to Jericho. And as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartemeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side, begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried the more a great deal, thou Son of David have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying unto him, be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, what wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."

JERICHOWAS a large town about eight miles west of the Jordan, and about nineteen miles north-east from Jerusalem. Near to this city the Israelites crossed the Jordan, when they entered into the land of Canaan. It was the first city taken by Joshua, who destroyed it to the foundation, and pronounced a curse on him who should rebuild it. This curse was literally fulfilled in the days of Ahab, nearly five hundred years after. It afterwards became the place of the school of the prophets. In this place Elisha worked a miracle greatly to the advantage of the inhabitants, by rendering the waters near it, that were before bitter, sweet and wholesome. In point of size it was second only to Jerusalem. It was sometimes called the city of Palm-trees, from the fact that there were many palms in the vicinity.

In making a few remarks on this interesting narrative, we would in the first place invite your attention to the fact that this was the first and the last visit of our Lord to Jericho. Fancy then that you see poor Bartemeus sitting by the way-side begging; throughout the wide world there is

but one individual who can restore his sight, and He is fast approaching. Bartemeus had often heard of Jesus of Nazareth, had heard of His mighty works, and for ought we know he may have often prayed that He might pass by that way, but he had never seen Jesus, how could he? he was blind. Poor man, Jesus was passing, and he knew it not, yet a little while and He would be far beyond the reach of the blind man's voice; but he hears a noise, the noise of the multitude who accompany Jesus; he inquires the cause, and is informed that Jesus is passing. Now, or never, he lifts up his voice determined to be heard; he thought not of the multitude who would be astonished at his cry, and turn an unfeeling gaze upon him; he thought of nothing but his *own need*, his *own misery*, and of the opportunity which might never return. But see, he meets with opposition from the unfeeling multitude, "Many charge him that he should hold his peace;" why should this great multitude be detained on account of one poor blind man? Onward they move, onward to the feast, to the holy city, to Jerusalem, but the poor blind man, what of him? will he suffer himself to be baulked thus easily? will he let slip the golden opportunity? will he sit down, contentedly, to grope through coming years of darkness while yet there is a hope, faint though it be, of reaching the ear of Him, who never yet heard mortal cry in agony and heard in vain? Oh, no, Bartemeus in years gone by had learnt the value of his sight, and now he sought it earnestly; he needed not the unfeeling multitude, "but cried the more a great deal, thou Son of David have mercy on me." Mark now his reward, "Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called." And the very persons who a few moments ago were endeavouring to keep him from the Saviour are now officious to bring him forward; they command him to be of good comfort; this rejoices the heart of the blind man, and he casts away his outer garment—the one that was thrown loosely over him. He threw it off, full of joy at the prospect of being healed, and that he might run without impediment to Jesus. This may be used to illustrate the manner in which a sinner should come to Christ. He should throw away the garment of his own righteousness; he

should rise speedily; should run with joy; should have full faith in the power of Jesus, and cast himself entirely upon His mercy. Our Lord knew well the reason why Bartemeus cried after Him, and yet He would not heal him unasked, therefore He inquired, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The blind man said unto Him, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." Learn hence that although God perfectly knows all our wants, yet He takes no notice of them till we make them known to Him by prayer.

Bartemeus appears to have had no friend to assist him, and, being blind, he was unable to seek the Saviour for himself; he was obliged to wait until Jesus passed by that way. But, even in this case, we can see how God in the midst of judgment remembered mercy, for although blind he was not dumb, he could still cry to the Saviour: "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." (Let us learn from this that it is never so ill with us but it might be worse.)

Bartemeus, far from being noticed by the Lord, could obtain for a while no answer to his earnest entreaties, yet he was not discouraged; shall He not rise up in the judgment, and condemn those persons who leave off praying if their cold and careless prayers do not receive an immediate answer; those who persevere in fervent prayer shall be blessed with blind Bartemeus.

Let us now endeavour, with the blessing of God, briefly to apply the subject to our own case. Brethren, there is a blindness of the heart and understanding which is natural to man; it is a fatal blindness, for they who are the subjects of it, unlike poor Bartemeus, feel not their need of light; they think themselves very capable of walking through the pits and snares of the world without a friendly guiding hand; they have never drawn near to the great Physician of souls with the prayer, "Lord, that I might receive my sight;" what wonder then, if having wandered for a short time they stumble and fall, fall into sin, for such there is but one Guide. "Thy word says the Psalmist is a lamp unto thy feet, and a light unto my path."

The darkness of our minds is not owing so much to the

infirmity of our nature, as to the impurity of our thoughts. Though we be born blind, yet we are able to see our way through the ways and difficulties that obstruct our path in this world. And some of us attain such knowledge in discovering the good things of this life that they fancy they possess a keener sight than those whom in the race of worldly activity they leave behind. Light and wisdom and a superior knowledge of the world are often boasted by those whose minds are darkened, whose views are bounded by scenes which with the splendour of the morning sun will pass away, will set, and be forgotten. However busily men may be employed, and however important may be the events which now pass before their eyes, in a very short time they will be succeeded by other scenes and other people.

Man in his natural state thinks that he is rich, and increased with goods, and hath need of nothing. But when the Spirit comes he convinces him that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Had Bartemeus never felt the inconvenience of being blind the Saviour had passed by unheeded; he would not have cried so earnestly after Him.

So, my brethren, while you remain in a state of nature, you will rest contented with such joys as the world has to offer, but, should your eyes at any time be opened to the glories of the eternal world, you will never rest contented until you have a good hope that God has granted you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.

Jesus passed but once through Jericho; we have seen how Bartemeus improved the only opportunity he had, and herein he is an example to us. We, my brethren, have had many opportunities of calling upon Jesus to take away the veil from our hearts, to open our eyes to see the things which belong to our peace, before they are hid from our sight; we have had many opportunities, but can *we promise*, can the youngest of us promise ourselves many more? Can I promise myself the pleasure of meeting you again in this place when six short days have passed away, again to intreat you to be reconciled to God, to be at peace with Him, to repent, to believe the gospel? No; short as the time may appear, it may

prove long enough to close these lips forever. Can you on your part promise that when next Sabbath comes you shall sit where you now sit? You know you cannot, the place which knows you now may know you again no more forever; this very moment the decree may have gone forth against some individual here present: "Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground." Jesus of Nazareth may be passing now among us, passing some blind sinner present for the *last time*; the sound of His retiring footsteps is dying away; soon, soon, if the voice of the wretched one is not heard calling loud for mercy, He will have passed, passed forever, and then a worse than Egyptian darkness will gather round that soul, a darkness which might be felt.

But let us suppose for one moment that the sinner, convinced of his sin, sensible of his danger, begins to cry: "Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me," the Saviour is at once arrested in His onward march. He stands, and bids the sinner come to Him, and he *must come* although an opposing world stand between him and his God; though father and mother entreat him not to leave them he must come, come with speed, like Bartemeus, casting *everything* behind his back which would *hinder* him in coming to the Saviour; yes, though it be dear to him as a *right hand*, or a right eye; therefore "the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

Did Bartemeus meet with opposition when he cried after the Saviour? Did many charge him that he should hold his peace? Oh then, my friends, you who have been convinced of sin, convinced of your danger, and are now crying after the Saviour, "Jesus, Master have mercy on us," marvel not if worldly people treat you in like manner; be not surprised if they charge you to hold your peace; why should you disturb them in the midst of their pleasures, their gainful pursuits, their dreams of glory? They hope to be saved, they hope to go to heaven when they die, although they have never once given it a serious thought; never once drawn near to the mercy seat with the cry "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us;" why would you convince them that something

more than this is required? Why would you convince them that they must be in earnest? They bid you hold your peace; let them alone; let them enjoy their pleasant dream a little longer. Will you harken to them? Will you obey their voice? Will you cease crying after the Saviour? So did not Bartemeus, when they commanded him to hold his peace; he cried so much the more, and you must imitate his example; then the Saviour will stand; you shall draw near to Him, and hear from His own lips the joyful news, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." Bartemeus had faith; he believed that Jesus was able and willing to restore his sight; therefore, he cried after Him, and in this sense it is said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole;" faith brought him to Jesus, Who healed him. Faith is the hand, not of the labourer stretched forth to receive his wages, but of the beggar extended for alms; faith is the rope cast to the drowning man, by means of which he is landed once more on the vessel's deck; faith is the channel through which the waters of salvation flow: "without faith it is impossible to please God;" without faith we cannot be saved; for unless we believe the word of God, when it testifies that we have all sinned, we shall think ourselves righteous, we will not inquire for the balm of Gilead nor seek the Physician that is there.

In conclusion, we would have you note Bartemeus' gratitude: "He followed Jesus in the way." What a blessed use he made of his sight, how thankful he was, how must love have filled his heart, love to the Saviour! Let each one present inquire what has the Saviour done for me? Has He opened your eyes to see your lost and perishing condition by nature? Has He ransomed you from the grave, from hell, from death? Has He opened wide to you the gates of heaven? Oh, then, take up the language of Ruth and say: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people." Oh, then take up your cross and follow Him, walk as He also walked while on this earth. He dwelt in lowliness, gentleness, meekness, love, long-suffering, and soon you will be called to follow Him into those realms of bliss, when He reigns in glory, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

REDEEMING THE TIME.

Ephesians, Chapter 5th, part of Verse 16th.

"Redeeming the time."

THE time which we are called upon to *redeem* is the space which lies between the *cradle* and the *grave*: "The days of our age," says the Psalmist, "are three score years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to four score years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone." Here is the limit, placed by God, to the life of man; to the young it may appear a *goodly heritage*; a *long time to come*; a kind of eternity, but the old know that it "*soon* passeth away, and they are *gone*." While time is coming towards us we imagine he moves *slowly*, but he has no sooner passed than we perceive his *wings*. Even Jacob, who lived to an age which none of us can hope to attain, could say at the *last*, "*few and evil* have the days of the years of my life been." When we reflect upon the *mighty* work which man has to accomplish before he departs hence, when we reflect that his soul must be *fitted* and *prepared here* for an eternal world,—hereafter—three-score years and ten will not appear too long; and, yet, how few arrive at such an age; from calculations made it would appear that half the human race die in early youth. Oh, what reason have we to be thankful that we were not so soon cut off; we are *still* in the land of the *living*; *still* in the land of *hope*; but time moves on, and will not wait; each *day*, each *hour*, each *minute*, brings us nearer to *heaven or hell*. Awful thought; are we prepared to meet our God when He cometh to judgment? Are we redeeming the time?

There are three different portions of our life which such a question naturally calls to view; that part of it which is *past*, that which is *now present*, and that to which we fondly *look forward*.

Brethren, a part of your life has passed; it has fled into

eternity; it has joined the years which were before the flood, how has *that past* been spent? Have we been obedient children, a comfort to all connected with us, "*swift to hear and slow to speak*," *diligently* preparing ourselves for whatever station in life unto which it might please God to call us? Have we been sober, young men of good report, *not* frequenters of taverns, *not* card players, *not* readers of *light* and *foolish* books, *not* newsmongers, wandering about from house to house, to *hear* or to *tell* some *new* thing; *not* busy bodies, meddling in others men's matters, for they that do *such things* do *not* redeem the time? But where is the person who, having lived for any time in the world, cannot remember having *done many* things which he ought *not* to have done; and having *left undone* many things which he ought to have done.

Now, though past time be gone, we are not to consider it as irredeemably lost. It may be applied to a very profitable purpose if we lay hold of it while it remains in remembrance and oblige it to contribute to present improvement. If we have gained nothing more by the years that are past, we have at least gained *experience*. We know our *weakness*, our *proneness* to sin. The time past of your life, whether it has been *well* or ill spent, cannot now be altered; if it has been ill-spent you may have seen your folly; you may have repented of it; let me hope that *you have*, and pass on to inquire how you are spending the *present* time. Are you *redeeming* it? Is each moment marked by some *good deed*, or *thought*, or *prayer*? Are your leisure hours devoted to Bible reading and to holding communion with your God, or are they spent in *foolish* talking and jesting? Are your Sundays, *holy days*, set apart exclusively for the *benefit* of your souls? Or do you spend them in sleep, in visiting your neighbours, in reading the *newspapers*, or some *light book*, or in thinking over your plans for the coming week? Brethren, life is very short; much that is of *real* importance remains to be *done*. If we suffer the *present* time to be wasted, either in absolute idleness, or in *frivolous* employments, it will hereafter call for *vengeance* against us. Removing, therefore, what is merely superfluous,

omit both and it, because and still more to my's mindless.

let us bethink ourselves of what is most material to be attended to at *present*, as, first and chief, the *great* work of our *salvation*; the discharge of the religious duties which we owe to God our *Creator*, and to Christ our *Redeemer*. "God waiteth, as yet to be gracious;" whether He will wait longer none of us can tell. Now, therefore, "*seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.*" Never delay till to-morrow what *reason* and *conscience* tell you ought to be done *to-day*. *To-morrow is not yours.*

Let us in the third place consider with what disposition we ought to look forward to those years of our life that may yet be to come. On *futurity* men build their designs; on *futurity* they rest their hopes; and, though not happy at the *present*, they always reckon on *becoming* so at some subsequent period of their lives. Much of *futurity is*, and *must be*, entirely unknown to us. Whatever other things may be *dubious* in *futurity*, two *great* events are *undoubtedly certain*, namely, *death* and *judgment*. These, we all know, are to *terminate* the whole course of time; and we know them to be not only *certain*, but to be approaching nearer to us in consequence of every day which passes over our heads. Let us *not* turn our eyes from them, as if we could place them at a greater distance by excluding them from our thoughts. This, *indeed*, is the *refuge of too many*; but it is the refuge of *fools*, who increase thereby the *terrors* they *must encounter*. For, "He that cometh shall come and will not tarry."

Brethren, if you hired a servant for a year, or a month, and paid him liberal wages, would you not expect him to be faithful and diligent? Would you not expect him to devote his time, strength and skill to your service? Should you find him idling the time, should you hear that when your back was turned he was in the habit of giving over work and lying down to sleep; would you not be grieved; but, worse still, should you find that he had become acquainted with your enemies, not only acquainted, but had made friends with them; should you find that, so far from studying your interest, he was actually spending the time you had paid him for in endeavouring to injure you and profit your enemy, would you not feel inclined to discharge him at once?

Now, we are, all of us, the servants of God! He claims us, because He *made* us, and because He *redeemed* us! Oh, what a *mercifully kind, indulgent* Master we have, He *commands* us to do nothing but what is for our *good*. If, then, God is our Master, *every moment* should be *consecrated* to Him. We should *daily, hourly, and each minute* ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" There should not be a thought in our *heart*, or a word on our *tongue* which would not tend to His glory; hear what the apostle says: "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." This is indeed to redeem the time, to apply it to the purpose for which it was given; but *how few* among professing Christians do this; *how few* have thus given themselves *up* to God; with *wills* resigned to God's will—they eat and drink that they may renew their strength and be better able to serve Him—*rising early* in the morning they hold *sweet* intercourse with God; they take nothing in hand through the day but what is lawful. Nor do they forget God while engaged in their *worldly* employments; their hearts often rise up to Him; the *prayer* is in *secret*; none hear it, not even those who are standing by, but God *hears* it; this is what is meant by praying without ceasing, praying always; blessed are those servants, whom the Master when He cometh shall find *so doing*; to them He will say: "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," but what will He say to the rest? Those I mean, who like the foolish virgins lie down to sleep, although they know that the Bridegroom will soon come, and that they are not prepared to meet Him. There is no neutral ground to stand upon; *either* we are redeeming the time or we are *not*. "He that is not for me," says the Saviour, "is against me;" and, if it were possible for a man to sleep all his days, from the *cradle* to the *grave*, and so do neither good nor evil, think you God would reward such an one; would He not rather call him "a *wicked and slothful* servant," like him who buried his talent in the earth.

Men in general set a high value on life, yet, when that life is divided into *days, weeks, months and years*, they do *not seem* to set a proper value on these *proportions of time*; and

yet it is by improving the *minutes* that time is *redeemed*. Perhaps no man if solicited in youth to give up his life to *idleness* or *pleasure* would consent to do so; and yet now many do we see so spending *minutes*, *hours* and *days*, forgetting that, as the *mighty* ocean is made up of *drops*, so the life of man is made up of *minutes*. Brethren, be careful of your *minutes*; if you squander (your money) you may *work hard*, and make it up *again*; if you *lose* it you may *find* it; but time *past*, time *ill* spent, who can bring it back, that we may redeem it? *What* can purchase it? Can *gold*? Can *diamonds*? Alas no! did we possess the *world*, and all that it *contains*, we could not by *parting with* it add one moment of time to our lives.

The wicked rich man would gladly exchange his wealth, the wicked general his glory, the wicked king his crown, when death has laid his hand upon him, for a single hour, that he might work out his salvation.

Shall we then set a *low* value upon time? Let the man who knows that his purse is *full* be lavish of his *gold*. Let the man who knows that his years shall be many be lavish of his *hours*; let him frequent the *race*, the *ball-room*, the *card table*; let him *gamble*, *drink* and *swear*; let him sin with a high hand. But, how shall the Christian do these things, who *daily*, *hourly* and each *moment* awaits the *coming of his Lord*. Ah, brethren, who has ensured your lives? Who has told you the *exact* moment when death will come that you should live so carelessly and *sin so presumptuously*? Has God said, "*Ye shall not surely die*," surely, surely, you do but deceive yourselves, you are as other men, as *weak*, as subject to death; your sands have nearly all run down; your moments are nearly spent; again I would ask, are you "*redeeming the time*."

Each moment as it goes from us passes behind the Throne of God, and then stands awaiting the day when the angel shall lift up his hand to heaven and *swear* by Him that liveth forever and ever that "*time shall be no longer*;" then, they will come forward, a dark array, to bear witness against us; the hours spent in sin, in *idleness*, in *foolish talking* and *jesting*, in *evil thoughts*, in *forgetfulness* of God; oh how vast a multitude will they appear; their name is *legion*; then the

scales will fall from our eyes, and we shall plainly discern what we ought to have done; then we shall understand the importance of the words "Redeeming the time;" we shall then perceive that no time was *well* spent but what was spent in God's service; we shall then perceive that we were not sent into this world to seek after *riches*, or *honour*, or *pleasure*, but to work out *our salvation* with *fear* and *trembling*. Oh, we shall then say: if God would but give me another opportunity, if He would but place me once more on earth, how *diligently* would I improve the time; *each moment* would be more precious than gold in my sight; I would not part with it until I had received value for it; it should be forever printed on my mind by some *good thought*, or *deed*, performed while it was passing.

But how vain are such wishes. Now is the time to make a good *resolution*, the potter's clay is in thy hand to *make* or *mar* it at thy will, or *idly* to leave it in the sun, an uncouth lump to harden. Be wise *now*, brethren, be wise for *eternity*; let each day as it passes bring you *nearer* to God, nearer to heaven. See that ye walk *circumspectly*, not as *fools* but as *wise*, redeeming the time, because the days are evil; soon He that cometh will come, and will not tarry; are you prepared to meet Him? Have you fled for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel? Have you found Him, whom your *soul loveth*? Even, *Jesus*, have you embraced Him, as your *precious*, your only *Saviour*, the *Chief* among *ten thousand*, and altogether lovely? Is He the subject of your *thoughts*, *words* and *actions*? Can you say with the apostle: "What things were *gain* to me, those I counted *loss* for Christ, *yea doubtless*, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but *dross* that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, *by faith*."

Believe me, brethren, however diligently you may improve the time, not a *day*, not an *hour*, will pass, but there will be

something in it to *need forgiveness*; all, even our *best services*, require to be cleansed in the blood of Jesus before they are presented to God.

But, not only is the *time short*, it is also *uncertain*; the angel may lift up his hand *this minute* and swear that *our time shall be no longer*. How often have we looked forth on the *fields* and admired the *green and flourishing grass*. We knew not that the mower was even then sharpening his scythe to *cut it down*; our attention was withdrawn for a *few hours*; the *mower came*; the *sun shone forth*; the work of *destruction was completed*; in the striking language of Scripture—"it was *cut down, dried up and withered*." Such is man and such is his life *to-day*, glorying in his *strength*, and rejoicing, as a giant to run his course, *to-morrow, pale, cold, lifeless, and ready for the tomb*.

Death is a mower, and all times are his to mow, in *summer* or in *winter*, in *heat* or in *cold*, by *day* or by *night*; he labours at all times, but his work will not be finished till time shall be no more.

WALKING WITH GOD.

Hebrews, 11th Chapter, 5th and 6th Verses.

"By *faith* Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But *without* faith it is *impossible* to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he *is*, and that he is a *rewarder* of them that *diligently* seek Him."

IT IS evident that Enoch was a man *famous* in his generation, although little is said concerning him in the Bible.

St. Jude calls him the seventh from Adam, and has handed down to us a prophecy of his, concerning the coming of the Lord to judgment. From the 5th Chapter of Genesis we learn that he was the *son* of Jared, and the *father* of Methuselah. "And that he walked with God. After he begat Methuselah. three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters." In the 24th verse, his *whole* history is summed up in these few words : "And Enoch *walked* with God; and he *was not*; for God took him." "Enoch walked with God;" can two walk together except they be agreed? *No*; not with any comfort to themselves. A wicked man would not like to live in the same *house*, or sit at the *same table*, or walk in the fields with a righteous man. And why? Because they have nothing in *common*, their *tastes* are different. There is an old saying, and I believe it is a *true* one, "That a man is known by the company he keeps." Solomon says something like this: "He that walketh with *wise* men, shall be *wise*, but a companion of *fools*, or *wicked* men, shall be destroyed."

Let the worldly man boast, when he is admitted into the company of the *rich*, the *noble*, and the *learned*, but the Christian may like Enoch "walk with God," he may have fellowship with the *Father*, and with his *Son* Jesus Christ. "What closeness, what familiarity (if I may use the expression) with that *great* and *awful* being do these few words imply! We

see here a *frail* man, clad in the garments of the flesh, walking in communion with the father of spirits; we see a man, by nature *sinful* and *polluted* as ourselves, walking *side by side*, as it were, with the *pure* and *holy* God. It is a wonderful sight; *one worthy* to attract the attention of the universe. What *amazing* condescension on the *part* of God thus to stoop to *low* and *sinful* man! And what a height of dignity for our *poor fallen* nature to attain. It is almost *incredible*; yet it is *really* true, and in exact accordance with God's own *solemn* declaration. "Thus saith the *high* and *lofty* one, that *inhabiteth* eternity, whose name is *holy*: I dwell in the *high* and *holy* place, with Him also that is of a *contrite* and *humble* spirit."

Brethren, are you endeavouring to imitate the example of Enoch? For three hundred years he walked with God; religion was with him the *grand* business of life; he walked with God as with a *friend*; prayer was *not* with him a *strange* work, but his *delight*, more *necessary* than his daily food. Enoch was a man of like passions with ourselves, he had the *same temptations* to *resist*, the same evil passions to *overcome*; the lust of the *flesh*, and the lust of the *eye* and the *pride of life* were as strongly developed in *him* as in *us*, and yet he was made *more* than conqueror through Him that *loved him*. It is evident, then, that there is nothing to hinder us from walking in the steps of Enoch, from walking with God, but *want of will*. We have *greater* privileges, *clearer* promises, and many helps which this *holy* man had *not*: "How then shall we escape if we neglect so *great* salvation." One thing is certain: if we never walk with God on *earth*, if we do not learn to *delight* in His company, to *pray* unto Him, and *praise* His name, while *here* below, it will never be recorded of us as it was of Enoch: "God took him." In one sense I know it may be said of all who depart this life that "God took them," for it is written: "*Then* shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." But, if I mistake not, in the case of Enoch the meaning is that God took him to *himself*, took him to *heaven*, took him to *happiness*. Who does not *envy* the lot of Enoch. Who is not ready to *exclaim*: "Let me die the death of the *righteous*, and let my last end be like his?" Mortify

then, your members which are upon the earth, walk with God now, think of Him constantly, forget Him not; *do all things* to His glory, and soon He will take you to Himself, and you shall be happy through all eternity. . . But if you say in your heart my Lord delayeth his coming, and begin to eat and drink with the drunken, if you *forget* God and seek your own *pleasure*, your own *profit*, your own *glory*, you shall be cast out into outer darkness, there shall be *weeping* and *gnashing* of teeth.

"Enoch walked with God; and he was not." "And he was not," this does not mean that he *ceased* to exist, but that he had passed from this *earth*, passed into *heaven*. St. Paul explains it in our text. "Enoch was translated, that he should not see death." *Happy* man, over whom *death* and the *grave* had *no dominion*; *happy* man, who escaped the fate of Adam's race, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou *return*." Let no one conclude that Enoch escaped death because he was *free from* sin; this would be to contradict many plain passages of Scripture. Why, then, was Enoch caught up unto heaven? The Scripture does not inform us, but we may be sure that God, who does nothing in vain, had some wise purpose in view. Perhaps the men of that generation, having no Bibles to instruct them, and seeing the *wicked* and the *righteous* laid *side by side* in the grave, had begun to doubt the *very existence* of heaven. In that case, nothing would so soon convince them of their error as seeing one of their number taken up into heaven.

Brethren, it may never be said of you: "He walked with God." But soon your surviving friends will say: "He is not, he has *departed*, he has *gone*, he has left this world," for the *place* which knows you *now* will soon know you again *no more forever*. Oh let me entreat you to think of *this* ere it be *too late* for your *own sakes*—for the sake of those who will stand *weeping* round your grave. Oh let me intreat you to *forsake your sins*, to *turn* to God; then your friends will be able to comfort each other when they meet; to say "God took him," he has gone to heaven; *then*, though they may *still weep*, they will not sorrow as those who have no hope.

Few subjects are better calculated to impress on us the

evil nature of sin than that which we are now considering. Where is the Christian, who, if he were permitted to choose, would not prefer to enter heaven as Enoch did; and *why* may we not enter it thus? *Because of sin.* Had Adam *never* sinned, I have no doubt *he* and *all* his posterity would have entered heaven as Elisha did, in *chariots* of fire; but he sinned. *Wordly* men make *light* of sin. *Fools* or *wicked* men *mock* at sin. But *let us* mark the consequence. Cast your eyes round the world, and what do you see? *Wars* and *fightings*, *disease* and *death*, *pain* and *misery*; you see millions stretched on beds of sickness, scarcely a *happy* man to be found. And did you ever ask yourself why is this? Is it possible that a *good* and *merciful* God created man to be miserable? Was our first father Adam created to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards? No; he was created in the image of God; *he* was *holy* and *happy* till he sinned. *Sin*, then, was the cause of his *misery* and *death*; before he sinned he delighted like Enoch to walk with God, but he had no sooner sinned than he sought to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden. Six thousand years have well nigh passed away since that sin was committed in the garden of Eden, and yet, my brethren, you and I still suffer from its effects, and *will continue to suffer* until laid in the silent grave. Millions of human beings have been born into the world since the time of Adam, and each one of them has had his peculiar *trials*, *sorrows*, *pains* and *sicknesses*, all of which might be traced back to that first sin; shall we then call it a *little sin* which brought *death* into the world, and all our *woe*? We have seen some of the evils which sin has brought on the *world*, on *man*, but have we seen all? Have we seen the greatest part? No surely. The word of God assures that the *pain*, the *suffering*, which sin has brought on man in this world is as nothing when compared with the *pain* and *agony* which it will bring on him in the world to come unless repented of and washed away in the blood of Christ.

If any inquire how did Enoch "walk with God," the answer is "*by faith*;" mark this, by believing on Him who should come after, that is on *Christ Jesus*; this is the victory which

overcometh the world, even *your faith*; Enoch believed in the existence of another and a *better* world; therefore he did not confine his thoughts to this, and before he departed he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Most men act as if they were their *own* masters, and had nobody to please but *themselves*; few acknowledge their obligation to Christ; few ask with the apostle Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" All seek their *own*, and *not God's* glory. How are we to account for this? Does it not prove that men want faith? Most certainly some men do not believe that there is a God. "The fool, that is the wicked man, hath said in his heart there is no God." Others believe there is a God, but that He takes no part in the affairs of the world, that He leaves everything to *time* and *chance*; such persons are represented in Scripture as inquiring, "Who is the *Almighty* that we should serve Him, and what profit shall we have if we pray unto Him?" They see the wicked prospering in this present world, and, if they believe in the existence of another, they hope to find themselves as well off *there* as *here*; why then should they serve God, seeing that "He causeth His sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the *just* and on the *unjust*." They forget that there is a time coming when they shall discern between the *righteous* and the *wicked*, between him that *serveth* God and him that *serveth Him not*.

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is." The first step in religion is belief in the existence of a God; it were no difficult task to prove the existence of a God, but I hope none of you are disposed to doubt it; who that looks round on the world, so *full* of wonders, with its *immense* continents, *mighty* oceans and *lofty* mountains, hanging as Job says "on nothing," who that considers its rapid flight through the air, but must admire the wisdom of that law which keeps everything in its proper place, although the world turns over and over; who that considers these things is not forced to exclaim, "*verily* there is a God that *ruleth* the earth."

"He that cometh to God must believe that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently serve Him."

No man ever yet set out on a journey to see a *person* in

whose existence he did not *firmly* believe. If we wish men to come to God, we *must* not only convince them that *there is a God*, but that "He is a *rewarder* of all those who *diligently* serve Him." To believe with the wicked that "there is *no God*" is a *most dangerous* error; to believe that there is a God, but that He *takes no* account of what is done on earth, is *no less dangerous*; and yet it is to be feared that this is a *common* error. Men do not believe that the eye of God is *continually* on them, that He sees their *going out and coming in*, and is acquainted with *all their ways*; they do not believe that *every sin, every evil thought, every idle word* is *noted down* in His book against the day of judgment, when it will *most certainly* condemn them, unless *repented of and washed away* in the blood of Christ. But the Christian *believes* all this, yea, more; he believes that God is a rewarder of those who *diligently* serve Him. Although in *this* world he sees the wicked prospering, he knows that there is *another* and a *better* world in which the wicked will have *no* part, and it shall be *well* with the *righteous*. Fixing his eye *steadily* on that *better country*, he moves cheerfully forward, knowing that each day brings him *nearer* to his journey's end. My brethren, are you *seeking* God? Are you seeking Him *diligently*? Do you seek Him in His Church? Do you seek Him in His *word and sacrament*? Do you seek Him in *family and private prayer*? Then know this for your *comfort*, that God is a rewarder of them who *diligently* seek Him.

When you see the prosperity of the *wicked*, *murmur not*, for that is the *price* of their souls, the *mess* of pottage, for which they have bartered their heavenly inheritance; be not surprised if you do not *prosper* as they prosper in this world, for, while you are *praying* for the *next* world, they are *working* for *this*; while you are reading your Bible on the Sabbath, they are forming plans for the coming week; while you are giving a *part* of your substance to God, and thus laying up *treasure in heaven*, they prefer to lay up treasure on earth.

If it were as easy to do *right* as to do wrong, most men would do right, but Satan persuades them that it is for their interests to break God's commandments; was not this the very

temptation by means of which he thought to overcome our Lord when he took Him up into a *high* mountain, and showed Him all *the kingdoms* of the world, and the *glory* of them, and said, "All these things will I give Thee if Thou wilt fall down and worship me." And is not this the very temptation by means of which many are overcome in our *own* day? Does Satan require any man to serve him for naught? No, his language still is, do *this*, and I will reward you. Does he want a man to *lie*, to *swear falsely*, to *steal*, or to *kill*, he will endeavour to convince him that there is something to be gained by it. But, remember, when he tempts you thus, that one sin committed and not repented of involves the loss of the *soul*, the loss of *heaven*, the loss of *happiness*, and "what shall it profit a man if he gain the *whole world* and lose *his own soul*; or what shall a man *give* in exchange for his soul?"

So then, if you could gain the *whole world* by committing the smallest sin, you would be foolish to commit it, for you would thus forfeit the *kingdom of heaven*. How then shall we find words to express the *folly* and *madness* of those who mock at sin, who *lie*, who *swear*, who take God's name in vain, who sacrifice their prospects of *glory* and *felicity* in the world to come without *money* and without *price*. The man who sells his soul for *riches*, *honour* or *pleasure*, although a fool, is not so great a fool as he who sells his soul for *naught* and takes no *money* for it.

Brethren, may you set a *proper* value on your souls; may you prize them above *gold* or *silver*, above *precious* stones, above *crowns*, above *kingdoms*, above *worlds*, for the heavens and the earth shall *pass away*, but the soul shall *remain forever*; it shall *never die*, but live on in *happiness* or *misery*, on, on, on, *throughout eternity*.

OBEDIENCE THE BEST EVIDENCE OF LOVE.

St. John's Gospel, 14th Chapter, 15th verse.

"If ye love Me, keep my commandments."

THESE words, on which we intend to offer a few remarks on the present occasion, appear to contain the *spirit* of the gospel, to point out *clearly* the *principle* on which the *true* Christian acts. All his *good works* and *alms-deeds* spring from *love to Christ*. In the words of the apostle "the love of Christ *constraineth us* to live *no more unto ourselves*, but unto *Him Who died* for us, and *rose again*." When man is convinced of sin by the Holy Spirit, and when the *awful* punishment which God has denounced against the sinner is revealed, when he *sees* and *feels* that there is a *hell*, and that he is fast approaching towards it, *fear* and *trembling* take hold on him, but, when God is pleased to reveal a way of escape, what language can express his *boundless joy*, and when that way is considered it is so *simple*, so *easy*, that none need be alarmed. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," and the *same God* Who has commanded us to believe will give us faith if we ask it *earnestly* in prayer; *believe* that Jesus Christ the *Eternal* Son of God, Who was in the beginning *with* God, and by Whom the *heavens* and the *earth* were made, became a *helpless* infant, a man of *sorrows*, and *acquainted* with *grief*; *believe* that the *pain* and *suffering*, the *grief* and *anguish* which He endured, while journeying here below, were brought upon Him by your sin, and, *above* all, believe that by His *cruel* and *ignominious death* upon the cross, He hath made an atonement for you—hath taken away the *curse* of a *broken law*—and reconciled *God* and *man*; in the words of the apostle: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, *not imputing* their trespasses unto *them*; for He hath

made Him to be *sin for us* Who *knew no sin* ; that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in Him."

True it is, that Christ died for *all* ; but it is not enough to *rest* here ; your faith must be *appropriating*, you must be able to *say*, and not only to *say* but to *feel*, Christ died for *me* ; meditate frequently on this *momentous truth* ; think Who it was that died that you might live.

He was *not* an earthly king, He was *not* an angel. He was *King of Kings* and *Lord of Lords*, the *Prince of Peace*, the *Everlasting Father*. Well may we exclaim : "*Behold* what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us." Now what does God expect from us in return ? He demands our hearts ; "*my son*," He says, "*give me thine heart*." He demands our affections, "*thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, with all thy *heart*, and with all thy *soul*, and with all thy *mind*, and with all thy *strength*."

And who will say that in this God demands too much ? Who has loved us as He does ? Who has suffered so much for us ? *Indeed*, it is absolutely necessary that we should love God *supremely*, that we should love Him better than any *thing* or *creature*, for it often happens in passing through life that God commands us to do *one thing*, and the creature entices us to do the *contrary*. In all cases of this kind whichever party has the *heart* is sure to gain the *victory*, and this perhaps will enable us to understand these words : "*He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me* ; and he that loveth *son* or *daughter* more than Me is not *worthy* of Me ; and he that taketh not his *cross* and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me."

It is said of Jacob that, when he served a hard master seven years for Rachel, they seemed to him but a few days for the love which he bore her, and many of you find it easy to do much for your parents, children and friends because you love them. But there is no love like that which a redeemed sinner bears to Him Who "*has loved him and washed him from his sins in His own blood*." Love produces the greatest effects when it is mutual. We are willing to do

and suffer much to gain the affections of a person we regard, though we are not sure of success; but, when the affection is reciprocal, it adds strength to every motive. Now the believer is not left in doubt and uncertainty, he knows that Jesus loved him first, loved him when he was in a state of enmity; and that nothing but the manifestation and power of this love could have taught his hard, unfeeling heart to love Him whom he never saw.

Brethren, do you *feel* the love of Christ, a *constraining* principle *within you*? Do you *feel* that you are *not your own*, that you have been *bought with* a price, even the *precious blood* of the *Eternal Son of God*? Have you determined to seek no more your own *pleasure* or *profit*, but to go *forth* and labour for the good of others?

"If ye love me, keep my commandments." We see here *love* laid down as the *foundation* of good works—"love to Christ." The Bible nowhere offers Heaven as a reward for doing good; but Heaven is offered as a free gift to every sinner who believes in Christ. True faith, however, never fails to produce *love*, and *love* is the *fulfilling* of the law; and here, perhaps, it would be instructive for us to compare the terms of the *law* and the *gospel*. The *law*, which is sometimes called the *covenant of works*, speaketh in this wise: "whoso doeth these things shall live by them", or, in other words, if a man will keep the *whole* law from the first dawn of *reason* till the hour of his *death*, he can claim Heaven as his reward, but if he *once stumble*, if he *break* one of the *least* commandments, all his hopes are at an *end*, all his labour is *lost*; the law can do nothing for him. From this state of bondage we are *delivered* under the gospel; we labour no longer as *servants* for *reward*, but as *sons* from a principal of love. With the eye of faith we look down into the *dark* and *dis-mal dungeons of hell*, and we sing: from these thou hast redeemed us, oh Saviour of men! Again we turn our eyes and the city of our God rises before us, the *heavenly* Jerusalem, with its *pearly* gates and walls of *precious* stones; and here we have a place *prepared*, "a house not *made with*

hands, eternal in the heavens," and for all this we are indebted to the love of Christ. Oh! brethren, how *cold* are our hearts, how insensible to such love; why are they not *melted*? Why are we not *moved*? Why are we not *pierced* with a sense of our *ingratitude*? Is it because we have *no sin* to be forgiven? Is it because we do not *believe* the Bible? Brethren, the day is *far* spent, the night is *at hand*, and your appointed work is not finished, the commandments of Christ are *not kept*, the tongue of the *slanderer* is not at *rest*, the *Sabbath breaker* has not forsaken his old sin, the swearer has not ceased to take the Lord's name in vain, and, worse than all, the love of God, which would restrain this wickedness, has no place in the hearts of many.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments;" the *service of love* is a *delightful* service; the *loving* child stands ready to anticipate the command of his parent; there is no need of a *rod*, or a *threat*, or a *promise of reward*; NO, he delights to do his *father's will*; it is his *meat* and *drink*. Again, the lover stands ready to obey the wishes of his mistress; she sends him forth a thousand miles *over mountains* and deserts, yet he *fainteth* not, neither *is weary*; *love* carries him through all, but there is a love *stronger* and *deeper* than these—the love which exists between the *believing* soul and its Saviour. *Deeper* than the love of *home*, *DEEPER* than the love of *kindred*, *DEEPER* than the love of *rest* and *recreation*, *DEEPER* than the love of *life* is the *love of Jesus*. And where it exists it cannot be hid, for it is a living principle within the soul, compelling it to action; man may, however, *deceive* himself, and think that he has it when he has it not. Let us then apply the Saviour's test; he says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" by keeping the commandments of God we *prove* our love, but *fain* are all our *professions* of love without this. Moreover we are told by an *inspired* apostle that "His commandments are not *grievous*," His yoke is *easy* and His burden is *light*; He requires us to do nothing for *His* sake but *what*, if we were wise, we would do for our own; He requires us to *forsake sin*, because He knows that *sin* and

*miser*y must ever go *hand in hand*; He requires us to love *God* because He knows that the creature must love *something*, and nothing else is worthy of his love.

One word more, and I have done. To you, brethren, who are anxious to know whether you love the Lord, I put the question: Do you keep His commandments? Not *one*, nor *five*, but *all*. Doubtless there is not one person who calls himself a Christian who does not keep *some* of them; one is *temperate*, and on the strength of that he reckons himself a Christian; he is *so taken* up with *this* commandment, *so pleased* with himself for *this* victory, that he has no time to think of the many commandments he has broken. *Another* is *almost* a Christian, but the love of money has taken such entire possession of his heart that it is hard to decide which, he loves most, his *Saviour*, or his *gold*; certain it is that when you lay before him the claims of the Church or the missionary society, he will either find some excuse for *not giving*, or he will give *so little* that you can *plainly* see that *shame* and not *love* *constrains* him. Like the young man who came to our Saviour with the question, "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" they think they can say of the commandments, "all these have I kept from my youth;" they think they love God with all their heart; they think they love their neighbours as themselves; but when the *test comes*, when the Saviour commands them to sell all that they have and give to the poor, then we see at once on what their heart is fixed; they go away *sorrowful*, *confessing* that *mammon* is their god. Brethren, you may never be called to make such sacrifices for your Saviour; He may not give your love so severe a trial; but, if He *should*, I pray God that you may be able to imitate the example of *Levi*, who, when called from a money-making business by one Who had not where on earth to lay His head, and therefore could not recompense him in this world, was enabled to *forsake* all, *rise up*, and *follow* Him.

Again, there are others who possess many Christian virtues, who like Herod do *many things*, of whom *nevertheless* it

can be said, "*yet lackest thou one thing.*" Each of us has his sin which does most easily beset—one has an *evil temper*, another is addicted to *scandal*, a third is *idle*, a fourth spends a part of his time in *foolish talking*, and we flatter ourselves, *perhaps*, that these are *small sins*, or we think that God will overlook the *breach of these* as we are *so strict* in keeping the other commandments. But has Christ made any agreement of this kind with His people? On the *contrary*, has He not expressly said by the mouth of His Apostle: "Whoso keepeth the *whole law*, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." There is *no license* for sin under the gospel; though it be dear to you as a *right hand*, or a *right eye*, you must pluck it out, and cast it from you, as you *hope* to enter into life.

Finally, brethren, I would say, "be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," that so, keeping all the commandments of God, you may have no reason to doubt your love, but may be able to adopt the words of the Apostle as your own: "I am persuaded that neither *death*, nor *life*, nor *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, nor things *present*, nor things *to come*, nor *height*, nor *depth*, nor any other *creature*, shall be able to separate us from the *love of God*, which is in *Christ Jesus Our Lord.*"

NOAH'S FAITH AND OBEDIENCE CONDEMNED THE WORLD.

Hebrews, 11th Chap., 7th Verse.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house ; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."

TO the question, what is faith ? it has been well answered faith is taking God at His word. St. Paul in the Creed from which our text is taken, in speaking of faith, and shewing how it wrought in the Patriarchs of old, gives us many noble instances of it in Abel, Enoch, Abraham, and Moses, but, after all, I think our text contains about as striking an example of faith as is to be found in the word of God : "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet." Noah's warning, this we find in the sixth Chapter of the book of Genesis : "And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before Me ; for the earth is filled with violence through them ; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make now an ark of gopher wood ; room shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven ; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish My covenant ; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee."

God warned Noah after this manner, and Noah believed God that it should be, even as He had said ; he did not begin to reason on the subject ; he did not question whether it was likely God would destroy so vast a multitude. No ; Noah believed God. But observe, brethren, he was "warned of things not seen as yet ;" he was warned to pre-

pare for a flood, which did not come till one hundred and twenty years had passed away. How many things might happen before the fatal day arrived? Noah might be gathered to his fathers and so escape the flood. Men might turn from their wicked ways, and God repent of the evil which He proposed to bring upon them. The time at least was long, and to many it would seem excusable to put off the commencement of the work to some future season ; but Noah believed God, and the ark was begun.

We know but little of the early history of Noah ; this only is recorded of him, that in the midst of a perverse and stiff-necked generation he found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

Whatever might have been his plans for the future, they were at once laid aside that he might engage in the work of the Lord. Fifty years have passed away since he was warned of God, and yet the appointed time is far distant ; all things are very much in the same state as when he commenced his work ; the sun shines brightly, and there is no appearance of a flood as yet. Noah looks forth, and sees his wicked neighbours building houses, planting vineyards and becoming richer and richer every day, while he is becoming poorer and poorer as the work progresses : yet his faith remains as firm as ever. Time passes on, and now the appointed day is close at hand, no black and threatening clouds are hovering near, and why? God knew that even the wicked would believe in the coming flood if they saw the heavens black with clouds, but He does not value such faith as this ; we will believe any person if he tell a probable story, part of which we know from other sources to be true ; but when God speaks we must believe, not because what He has foretold is probable, possible, or likely to happen, but simply because He has said it, though it seem impossible.

Let us draw near and view this mighty work, this proof of heaven-born faith ; one hundred and twenty years was this ark in building, and we may well suppose Noah was poor when it was finished. What if it should prove of no service? What if, after all, there should be no flood? So the wicked

world around him hinted, so they hoped but such a thought never entered Noah's mind ; he was strong in faith, he staggered not through unbelief. "Hath God said, and shall He not do it ; hath He spoken, and shall He not bring it to pass ;" and also, "the strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent ; for He is not a man that He should repent."

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house."

We see here the motive which prompted Noah to build the ark—it was fear ; fear, lest he and his family should all be overwhelmed in the waters of the flood, and this fear kept him to the work till it was accomplished. But how came Noah to build an ark as the means of escape from the dangers of the flood ? Would it not have been a safer and less expensive way to climb up into some high mountain ? So worldly men might think. But God had commanded Noah : "Make thee an ark," and Noah believed that God knew what it was safest and best for him to do. God had promised safety to Noah and to his family if they entered into the ark, but they had no promise from Him if they sought safety in any other way. To carnal men the ark might seem frail, ill-put together, and not at all likely to endure the rough waves which were soon to lift it from the earth. But Noah knew that there was safety in the ark, for the promise of God rested upon it ; therefore he did not hesitate to enter it with his wife and his sons and his sons' wives.

Noah by his conduct condemned the world. There was a time perhaps when he like his neighbours was engaged in worldly pursuits, adding house to house and field to field, but when the warning came, Noah did not neglect it ; he heard the command, "Make thee an ark," and immediately he commenced the work, and by so doing he condemned the world, for they had seen him like themselves engaged in the things of time, and could not help observing this sudden alteration in his conduct ; they knew him to be a man of

sound sense, and prudent, and we may be sure they inquired from him the reason of his conduct, and he no doubt informed them of the warning he had received, and stated to them his belief, that the flood would surely come at the appointed time. No one could doubt Noah's sincerity or his belief in the coming flood who observed him week after week, month after month, and year after year, toiling to build an unwieldy vessel on dry land which could be of no service to him for any purpose but one. By such conduct he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Of Abraham it is written, "that he believed God, and it was counted unto Him for righteousness." Abraham was not saved, because he was righteous in himself, or on account of his good works, but simply because he believed in a coming Saviour, as we are now saved by believing in a Saviour Who has already come. The Scripture informs us that "the just shall live by faith," that is, by believing in the atonement made for their sins by Jesus Christ, by believing that He fulfilled the law for them; this faith works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world.

Brethren, we have been considering the conduct of Noah in one of the most trying seasons of his life; we have seen how wisely he acted on that occasion, and how rich a reward his faith reaped; shall we then go away and forget it all? Let us rather apply it to our own case, for we also, as Noah was, have been "warned of God of things not seen as yet;" we have been warned that "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." We have been warned "to prepare to meet our God;" we have been warned of an unseen hell, and of our danger of falling into it. But, my brethren, who amongst us has believed the warning? Who has been induced to forsake his sins? Professing to believe the Bible to be the word of God, we are unmoved at its warnings; we heed not its

threats ; they pass by us as the idle wind, which we regard not ; they are listened to to-day and forgotten to-morrow.

Brethren, could we convince you that to-morrow you would be seized, dragged from the bosom of your family, shut up in some dark and loathsome prison and tormented in the most cruel manner, would not fear and trembling take hold upon you ? Could you go home from this service as the most of you will laughing and talking as if nothing was the matter. No, my brethren, you could not ; it is not in man to believe pain so near and be unconcerned.

Now, when God speaks in a voice of thunder, when He says, "the wicked shall be turned into hell and all the people that forget God," we look to see the countenance of man turn pale ; we expect to hear him immediately inquire, "what must I do to be saved ?" but when we see him sitting before us unmoved, when we meet him again as worldly as ever, as fond of pleasure, as ambitious, what are we to think ? does he believe the word of God ? No, my brethren, he does not ; he is an unbeliever.

Who has not heard of and who has not admired the courage and constancy of those great and good men who in every age of the Church have been ready to lay down their lives rather than deny the faith ? But why do we admire their courage ? They did but brave the puny power of man who can only kill the body ; they did but suffer the excruciating pain of fire for a few hours ; while you, my brethren, are not afraid to brave the anger of the Almighty. The worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched, have no power to drive you from your sins. Man speaks, he threatens, and the bravest of his fellow men are awed by the terror of his countenance ; they yield and obey. God speaks, He threatens, but there are none so poor as to do Him reverence, the most cowardly of the sons of men bear themselves boldly towards the King of Kings ; proudly they enquire, "who is the Almighty that we should fear Him ?" Brethren, these things ought not so to be ; shall we fear man whose breath is in his nostrils, and shall we not fear Him who

made Heaven and Earth? Noah did not act thus; when the warning came, "moved with fear he prepared an ark." Let us go and do likewise, or rather, let us enter into that ark which God in His mercy has already provided for the safety of His believing people.

"Noah prepared an ark to the saving of his house," and, can we, my friends, as Christians, do less? Can we rest content with knowing that we ourselves are safe while many of our friends have not entered into the ark, have not believed on Christ? Surely not. Let us labour and strive then that all may enter in; the ark is large, there is room for all, father and mother, brother and sister, parent and child; I would entreat you all to enter.

Noah by building and entering into the ark condemned the world, and the world is still condemned; all who are not in the ark are condemned, when they see one of their number who once sought pleasure, or wealth, or fame as the chief god turn to God with all his heart, and enter into the ark. Have we not seen the worldly man whose heart was once set on gold become liberal to the poor? have we not seen him building churches and sending forth missionaries to preach the Gospel? Have we not seen a woman such as the Apostle describes, "she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth," never absent from the theatre, and the ball room, a selfish creature, having no object in life but her own amusement; have we not seen such an one marvellously changed? Forsaking her old companions, casting aside her novels, forsaking the theatre to visit the humble dwellings of the poor, deserting the ball-room to sit beside the couch of the dying; do not such persons by their conduct condemn the selfish world around them? Do they not proclaim aloud by their actions their belief in a future state?

Before the flood came the ark was open to all, and they were invited to enter; we may suppose that many had resolved to do so. Perhaps they came to the door; perhaps they even entered in and remained for a day or two, but seeing no rain descending, no appearance of a flood, their

faith began to waver at this critical moment ; perhaps some worldly friend passed by and enticed them from the ark ; perhaps they went out for a few hours to bid adieu to their friends, or to secure some money or jewels, which in their hurry they had forgotten ; *then it was* that the flood came when they least expected it, and all who were not found in the ark perished.

Brethren, what a warning to us ! Our ark is built, the door is open, and whosoever will may enter in now ; high and low, rich and poor, proud and humble. But all who enter in *must be changed*. As it was in Noah's ark, so it must be under the Gospel ; the lion must lie down with the kid, the high must be brought low, the rich must become poor in spirit, the sinner a saint, the proud humble. Remember, you can never enter the ark unless you are changed ; you must not be almost but altogether a Christian ; it is not enough to come to the door of the ark ; you must enter in, and abide there.

Though worldly friends entreat thee, though mammon entice thee, consent thou not ; no, not for one moment, to quit the ark as you value your immortal souls.

But in conclusion, brethren, there is one point which we would earnestly seek to impress upon you—we have already said that the door of the ark is open now, but how long it may remain so is more than we can say ; to one, and to all, it is open now. Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Oh, haste, haste, and enter into the ark ere yet He swear in His wrath that you shall not enter in ; we speak not of weeks, or days, or of hours, but of the present moment. Resolve, *now* to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh ; resolve *now* to give yourself up to God, to be wholly His, in body, soul, and spirit, studying to do His holy will and pleasure all the days of your life.

Remember, the flood, that is death, is near. Some of you may never hear another sermon. Oh, let me entreat you to enter into the ark, to believe on Christ ; there all will be well, all will be safe.

OUR LORD'S LAST COMMAND TO HIS CHURCH.

St. Luke, 22nd Chap., part of 19th Verse.

“This do in remembrance of Me.”

This is the command of our Saviour Christ; and as you will observe, it has reference to something which has gone before. He had just instituted the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; in the beginning of the 19th verse we read: “And He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, this is My body which is given for you; this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the New Testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” The meaning then of the commandment is that we should meet together at certain seasons to partake of this *heavenly* feast, to commemorate the *exceeding great love* of our *Master* and *only Saviour* Jesus Christ thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which by His precious blood-shedding He hath obtained to us, and as often as we look on that bread *broken* it should carry us in thought to Calvary; we should see with the eye of faith the Saviour's bleeding and mangled body on the Cross, and, reflecting that we were the cause of His death, that it was our sins which crucified Him, we should be humbled in the dust, and while bemoaning our own sinfulness we should lift up our hearts to God, “Who has so loved us as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

And when we see the wine poured forth it should remind us of the Garden of Gethsemane, and of the great drops of blood which issued from the pores of His blessed body; it should remind us of His hands and feet *pierced* when He was nailed to the Cross; of the soldier's spear which pierced

His blessed side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

How *just*, and yet how *merciful* is God! He said to Adam, "in the day thou eatest thereof *thou* shalt *surely* die," and to each of us he says, "The soul that *sinneth*, it *shall die*." Now when Adam had sinned by eating the forbidden fruit, and when we had *all sinned*, and come short of the glory of God, then, to all human appearance, there was no hope for us, *nothing remained* but a *certain fearful* looking for a day of judgment, and *fiery indignation* which would consume us; then it was that the Son of God came to the rescue. "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore His own arm brought salvation unto Him, and His righteousness it sustained Him." God gave the sinner no hope of pardon until the Son had agreed to take man's nature and in upon Him, to suffer for us upon the Cross, to fulfil the *law* which we had broken.

Now, therefore, God can *be just* and yet the justifier of him that *believeth* in Jesus. Now the Kingdom of Heaven is open to *all* believers; the sins of all that believe are imputed to Christ, and His righteousness is imputed to them; this is the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture. But all who are out of Christ are in a state of condemnation; he that believeth not shall be condemned. They are under the curse. God has opened a way of escape for them, He commands them to believe on Him Who justifieth the ungodly; if they refuse to do so they must bear the consequences. If God had pardoned the sinner without punishing Christ, we might think that sin was not hateful to Him, but now we see that, though He pardons the believing sinner, it is because Christ has suffered in his stead. See here the wonderful love of God; He *spared not* His *own* Son, but freely gave Him up for us all, and if when meditating on this solemn truth we are duly affected by it, if the wonderful love of God *to us* produce in us a *like love to Him*, Christ will not have died *in vain*, if it has the effect of *slaying the enmity* which is in our

hearts to His commandments, of *reconciling* us and bringing us near to God.

"This do in remembrance of me." Thus the Lord commands, and if any enquire why should we remember the Saviour, we might content ourselves with asking what is the meaning of the word Saviour. Does it not signify a *deliverer*, one who rescues from danger? Is it not natural to love such an one? Ought not our love to him to increase in proportion to the greatness or the deliverance he has wrought? If he has delivered us from a *slight* danger, a *little* love may satisfy him; if from a *great* danger he may justly claim a larger amount of love. If the deliverer has exposed his person to great danger and suffering on our account, this should engage us to greater love. If our deliverer be a Prince or a King our love should be increased, that one so august and mighty should be pleased to endanger his person for our sakes.

Do you ask then why we should remember in love Jesus the Son of God? I answer, because He *pitied* us in our *low estate*. When we had all sinned, and God was about to cast us into the *lake of fire*, He stepped in and said, "deliver them from going down to *the pit*, I have found a ransom." Believe me, brethren, it was no common deliverance He wrought, for not only did He rescue us from the endless torments of hell, but He *opened wide the gates of glory*. Oh that our love to Him bore some proportion to the agonies we hope to escape through Him. Oh that our love to Him bore some proportion to the bliss of heaven, which we hope through Him to attain unto.

If the hand of a fellow mortal has at any time snatched us from the *devouring flames* or from a *watery grave*, although the owner thereof may have been a stranger to us, he is so *no longer*, he quickly becomes a friend, in whose welfare we are *deeply* interested; there may be *exceptions*, but the generality of men consider themselves bound to *love and reward* those who have saved their lives. But these same men do not consider themselves bound to love the Saviour;

why not? Because they have *never seen* their danger, *never felt* their sin.

Brethren, let us pray that God may enable us to see our *lost* and *perishing* condition by nature, that we may love that Saviour *more* who has snatched us as *brands from the burning*. But how was that great deliverance wrought? Did he do it by a word of His mouth? Nay, my *brethren*, it *cost more* to redeem your souls. The King of Heaven was obliged to lay aside His *sceptre* and His *crown*, to stoop, to become a man, and when He appeared in this lower world He wore no *crown of gold*, He abode not in the *mansions* of the great, an *outcast* and a *wanderer* He had not where to lay His head; He came to His *own* and His own received Him not; the world was made by Him, yet the world knew Him not; He was *tempted*, He was *slandered*, He was *persecuted*, He was *scourged*, He was *spit upon*, He was *mocked*, He was *crowned* with thorns, and *last of all* He suffered an ignominious death upon the Cross. Jesus knew full well what it would cost Him to be able to save the souls of believers, yet none of these things moved Him, neither counted He His life dear unto Himself when He saw our danger. Oh brethren, let our love to Him be in proportion to what He has suffered for us.

"This do in remembrance of Me." Here is a command, but to whom is it addressed? To you, my *friends*, and to *me*, and to *all* who name the name of Christ. He offered Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the *whole* world. He opened the Kingdom of Heaven to *all* believers; all are invited to believe *on Him*, and to enter; to all who have ever heard the Gospel the command is addressed, "This do in remembrance of Me."

Brethren, let us go forth into the world *professing Christ*, we must not be ashamed of *Him* or His *cause*; we should speak for His *honour* and glory in His *Cross*. Profession now is peculiarly demanded from us as communicants, and whilst in these days real religion is branded with every evil name that an ungodly world who knows not the truth can

invent, we must heartily welcome these *reproaches*, and walk so as to deserve them, not *silent, hiding* our heads, *sealing* up our lips, and leaving the world to their own ways, but by an open declaration at every proper season, bearing testimony against them, that their works are *evil*, boldly rebuking vice by *word* as well as *practice*, having "no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness," but separating ourselves from all *intimate society* with every brother that walketh disorderly, whose conversation agrees not with the *simplicity* of the Gospel. This will make us singular, it is true; we shall be unlike the world and displease the world, but wherefore do we meet at Christ's table but to make our solemn declaration to Him, that "we are not of the world, even as He is not of the world." And how shall we dare be so unfaithful as to go *forth* and *mix familiarly* and be *bosom friends* with those who are "enemies of the Cross of Christ, who glory in their shame, and who mind earthly things." "Take up thy Cross and follow Christ" is, as you all know, the Christian's sacramental watchword. But how unfaithfully have many of us hitherto performed it. How utterly are we strangers this day to any reproach or shame for Christ's sake. Where is our cross that we have borne in the world? Alas! we go from the Lord's table, and return again to the world just as before, lost in its *cares*, its *pleasures* and *vanities*, and how then should the world have any quarrel with us? "We are of the world, and therefore the world loves its own." We never by our professions disturb the slumbers or security of the unawakened souls around us; the form of a ceremonious duty will reprove nobody. But be *sincere*, and then you *cannot* escape. Go into the world, *speak* as a Christian, *profess* your views, live for Christ, and *then* the world and you will have no longer fellowship; for, if you are then chosen *out of the world*, the world *cannot but hate you*. Let this, brethren, comfort you, who bear forth Christ's name in the *world*, as well as at His *table*; the Cross is an *honourable* badge; to be *reproached* for righteousness' sake is *happiness*. The remembrance of our surrender to

Christ will make us count all things *light* and *easy*, and *suffering* as Christians we need not be *ashamed*. "We know in Whom we have believed." We know under Whose banner we have taken the Sacrament to *fight*, and God forbid we should quit our colours for *shame*, *reproach*, *evil report*, *dishonour* or reviling, yea, though we were called for His sake to prison or to death.

We must practice as we profess, going forth to give up our *bodies*, *souls* and *spirits* to Christ, and to walk worthy the high vocation wherewith we are called ; we should carry away with us, impressed upon our *hearts*, the vows we have made, that so, whenever sin would tempt us, we may have this answer to make, "How shall I do this *wicked thing* and sin against God," seeing I have but lately so solemnly given up myself to Him ? The eyes of the world will be upon us, and they are *piercing* and *quick* ; if they see our conversation to be nothing different from their own, they will say, "What do ye more than others ?" and what advantage will this give to the adversaries of the Lord to blaspheme ! "These, they say, are your communicants ; here they are all devotion, but go home with them from church and you see them as *passionate* and *proud*, as *covetous* and *worldly*, as *vain* and *trifling*, as *false* and *deceitful* as any of their neighbours." And if this be the case with any of us, brethren, what a curse will it bring upon us ! What a disgrace will it be to our profession ! And how will religion be wounded, even in the house of its friends, by our unbecoming conversation ! May not the adversaries of the Lord then be hardened in their sins, and confirmed in their prejudices, whilst they see under the outward cloak of profession that rank hypocrisy lurks within, and, saving outward appearance, that we are neither more *humble*, more *holy*, more *mortified*, more *heavenly-minded* than themselves.

But, if we would not have this heavy guilt lying upon our souls, then we must labour to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things by such unblamable conduct that they who seek occasion against us may be disappointed, and find

noevil thing justly to say of us; our lives should be as the light of the morning, which shineth *more* and *more* unto the perfect day, and our works such as may glorify our Father in Heaven.

FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.

Numbers, 10th Chap., 29th Verse.

"And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel. And he said unto Him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred."

THE portion of Scripture which we have just read to you forms part of a conversation which passed between Moses, leader of the Jews, and Hobab, his brother-in-law, the son of Reuel, or Raguel, or Jethro, for he was sometimes known by each of these names. The apostle Paul informs us that, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope." Now, this which is true of all Scripture is (if I may be allowed the expression) more evidently true of that particular part which is now under our consideration. The bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt was typical of that bondage which every believer has at some time or other experienced; and you may have remarked that, when God rescued the children of Israel from that bondage, He did not at once lead them by the shortest way to the promised land; no, they were permitted for a time to wander in the wilderness, that God might prove them, and know what was in their heart; but when at length He brought them to the borders of Canaan and commanded them to enter, and they entered not in because of unbelief, "God swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest," and with two exceptions the carcases of that vast multitude fell in the wilderness. So when the sinner by the mighty power of God is rescued from the bondage of sin and Satan, he is not at once caught up into Paradise, but he is led into the wilderness of the world, there to be tempted of the devil, that his faith may be proved; there, sustained by the grace

of God, he must triumph over principalities and powers; he must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts; he must meet in battle and overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; but let him be assured of this, that as soon as he can say with the apostle, "I have fought a good fight," his crown of glory shall be ready for him; as soon as he is prepared for heaven he will be taken up thither, he will not be detained in the wilderness of this world *one moment longer* than is necessary for his good. Most wonderful was the way in which God provided for His people in the wilderness forty years: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat;" day by day He sent to them that they might learn to trust in Him. And from whence does the believer draw the spiritual food which sustains his sinking soul? does it not, like the manna of the Israelite, descend from heaven daily in answer to prayer? Hear the words of our Lord: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on Me hath everlasting life. I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead; this is that bread which cometh down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die."

In considering the words of our text, we shall proceed in the first place to speak of Moses' declaration; secondly, of his invitation; thirdly, of the manner in which it was received.

First, Moses' declaration, which is contained in these words: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." This seems to have reference to a promise made unto Abraham nearly 400 years before, which you will find in the 13th Chapter of Genesis: "And the Lord said unto Abraham: lift up now thine eyes and look from the place where thou art, northward and southward, and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever." There was a precious promise, but one which required an uncommon degree of faith to embrace it; for Abraham was now growing old, and as yet he had no son; and the promised land was in the possession of fierce and warlike nations, men of gigantic stature; and when Isaac was born he did not at once inherit the land, neither yet his son Jacob after him, but as strangers and pilgrims they were permitted to wander up and down in it, until at last Jacob and

his family were compelled by a famine to pass down into Egypt, where he died, and his descendants were reduced to slavery; which state of things we find from the 15th Chapter of Genesis God had revealed to their forefather: "And he said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance."

"We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you." Observe, brethren, the holy confidence of Moses; there is no doubt expressed, not a shadow of unbelief; one would think that Moses and the children of Israel were going to take possession of some fruitful land which was not inhabited; but was this the case? No, the land was thickly peopled; the sons of the giants dwelt there; but did Moses know this? Most certainly he did, and it is this which makes his faith so remarkable; the promise of God standeth sure. He had said I will give it you, and Moses believed God, and marched forward, knowing that God would fight for Israel.

We come now in the second place to consider the invitation: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." This invitation was given by Moses to Hobab, his brother-in-law, and was no doubt extended to all his wife's kindred. Convincing that they would soon be in possession of a land flowing with milk and honey, he was desirous that all whom he loved should share in their good fortune. This little circumstance places the character of Moses in a very pleasing light; it shows a freedom from selfishness which we seldom find; he must have known that the more he invited to come with them the smaller would be his portion in the promised land, but he was willing not only to divide the country with them, but also to allow them a voice in the government of Israel.

Let us consider the circumstances of these two persons. Hobab we may suppose was rich in flocks and herds, comfortably settled down on some fertile spot in the wilderness. Moses on the other hand was leading the children of Israel through a barren wilderness with which he was very little

acquainted, a land in which there was neither meat nor drink to sustain them; he was leading them against a powerful people; to all appearance there was nothing before them but dangers and hardships. Things being in this state, he invites his friend and relation, Hobab, to forsake his native land and kindred, and to cast in his lot among them: "Come thou with us and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." But did Hobab stand in need of anything? Not in a worldly point of view; the chief benefit he would receive would be in spiritual things; by accepting Moses' invitation he would be able to attend the daily service of the tabernacle; he would learn many things of the worship of the true God of which he was at present ignorant. But you will observe that all Moses' promises were conditional; they depended for their fulfilment on a promise which God had given: "The Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Worldly men would say this was to give up a certainty for an uncertainty; Moses, however, did not look upon it in that light; such confidence had he in the Lord's promise that he spoke already as if he was in possession—such is the nature of true faith.

We come now to consider the manner in which the invitation was received. Hobab's own words are these: "I will not go; but I will depart to my own land and to my kindred." What were his reasons for coming to this determination we shall now attempt to discover. And first there appears a want of faith; when he looked on the trials and dangers through which the people had to pass his heart failed him; he thought they would never reach the promised land, much less enter on possession; again, his affection, his love was engaged for his native land and kindred; he was contented and happy in the wilderness; he had no desire after a better country; not being able sufficiently to appreciate the spiritual privileges and blessings which were now offered to him he refused to go; that he afterwards repented of his decision is certain, for we read of his descendants living in the land of Canaan.

Let us now briefly apply what has been said.

We find the children of Israel in Egypt in a state of bondage, groaning under the oppression of their taskmasters, en-

slaved both in body and mind, compelled to work day after day in the brick kiln, their only reward a miserable pittance, scarcely sufficient to keep soul and body together. What a striking picture have we here of the sinner, of man by nature; in bondage to Satan, a more cruel master even than Pharaoh, compelled to toil in the most loathsome, the most revolting employments.

Like the prodigal—but as the father of the prodigal viewed him afar off, and pitied his miserable condition, so the God of Israel was not unmindful of His people, and spoke to Moses saying : “I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee unto Egypt.”

Ye know, brethren, what mighty signs and wonders God wrought in that land before Pharaoh would let the people go ; and such of you as have come out of the spiritual Egypt, who have been delivered from the bondage of sin, can testify that deliverance was not brought by man, the Arm of the Lord was revealed, was made bare ; ye were led forth by a greater than Moses, even the Lord Jesus Christ. As the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea, so have ye through the waters of baptism; and like as they were not suffered at once to enter into the promised land, but were compelled to wander up and down in the wilderness forty years, that God might prove them and know what was in their heart, so ye in the wilderness of this world are constrained for a time to dwell. See to it, brethren, that your hearts do not turn back again into Egypt. Say not with the Israelites of old: “Who shall give us flesh to eat ?”

“We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you.” It was this which supported Moses under all his difficulties and trials; he knew that the wilderness was infested with fiery serpents and scorpions, and he knew that it was a barren wilderness through which they had to pass; but, when the food failed and the water proved bitter, he murmured not; nay, the very things which afforded arguments to some for their return into Egypt did spur him forward to that *good and pleasant land* which was filled with all manner of store.

And, my brethren, we would do well to imitate his example; when things do not prosper with us as we could wish, let us turn our thoughts to the golden fruit which is now ripening for us on the trees of Paradise; let us think of that stream which proceedeth out of the throne of God clear as crystal: "Whoso drinketh of this water shall never thirst again." Like Moses we can say: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you." Let others who have never heard of, or who have never had a glimpse of this heavenly land, be content still to abide in Egypt. We, in the name of the Lord of hosts, and under the great captain of our salvation, bidding defiance to all opposers, will go forward; and we would say, not to our own friends and relations only, but to *all*: "Come with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

And, my Christian brethren, are we not too often verily guilty in this matter? Having a good hope that we are walking the straight road that leads to heaven, we can with cold indifference watch our brother as he strays down the broad way that leads to destruction. We do sometimes meet with those who are hurrying back into Egypt, with those who have determined to walk no more with Jesus. How do we treat them? Do we shun them? Do we pass them by with cold indifference? or do we draw near in a friendly manner and inquire the reason of their conduct? Do we entreat them to be reconciled to God? to turn their faces Zionward once more? Do we endeavour as much as in us lies "to lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees?"

Brethren, if you saw a blind man who had lost his guide straying on the edge of some lofty precipice beneath which the sea foamed and raged, what would you do? Would you rush forward at once to save? or would you ask with Cain: "Am I my brother's keeper?" I know that you would hasten to the rescue, prompted by your natural kindness of heart and the miserable state of the blind man. Now, this is but a faint image of the state of the sinner; he is walking over a lake of fire with nothing between him and the burning fluid but a thin scum or crust which bends and cracks with his

weight as he passes on; it is becoming thinner and thinner every moment; soon, soon, he must sink and be lost forever; yet all unconscious of his danger he moves gaily on. Surely he is blind or mad. Will no one stretch forth a pitying hand to save? Is there no man to care for his soul? Alas, brethren, this is the case with too many; the eye of sense will not help us here; the sinner does not appear to be blind, neither can we see the precipice on which he stands with our bodily eyes; he is often rich and happy in the present world, and it is only with the eye of faith that we can foresee his awful state in the next. We know that he has sinned, "for all have sinned." We know also that God hath said: "The soul that sinneth it shall die." True, there is one way of escape, therefore we ask, has he believed on the Lord Jesus Christ? Has he repented of sin? If not he is on the brink of the awful precipice, and Hell yawns beneath ready to receive him; haste, haste, to the rescue all ye who see his danger; cease not day and night to warn and to entreat with tears, "Come thou with us and we will do thee good, for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." And if, like Hobab, he answer you and say: "I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred;" oh, leave him not until you have reminded him of these solemn words of our Lord: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after Me is not worthy of Me."

The spirit may bless this your last effort; may wean him from the love of earthly things, and cause him like Hobab to repent of his rash determination; and should he leave this earthly scene before you, when you are called to pass through the swellings of Jordan, and to enter the heavenly Canaan, you may find him on the bank ready to receive you, to welcome you to those happy abodes, "to rise up and call you blessed." "Was not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

THE HOUSE OF MOURNING VERSUS THE HOUSE OF FEASTING.

Ecclesiastes, Chapter 7, Verse 2.

"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; for that is the end of all men ; and the living will lay it to his heart."

MANY of the maxims contained in the book of Ecclesiastes will not be approved of by *worldly* men, but let them be attentively perused, for they are not the doctrines of a *retired* student, but of one who had enjoyed all the pleasures of life. The sovereign of a powerful people, one of the *richest* and *wisest* of kings, Solomon set himself to seek after happiness; he tried all things, and in conclusion he found that *vanity* and *vexation* of spirit was the total amount.

In the portion of Scripture which we have chosen for our text, Solomon assures us that it is more profitable for us to visit the *house of mourning* than the *house of feasting*; he no doubt had frequently been present, and had well observed the effect wrought by each on his own mind, so that, were we to consider these words as nothing more than the experience of a *wise* and *learned* man, they ought to have great weight with us, but when we reflect that Solomon was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost when he wrote, our mouths are stopped, we dare not *gainsay* or *resist* them.

You will observe that Solomon is not now treating of man as a being sent into this world to *eat* and *drink*, and then cease to exist, but as an *immortal* being, placed here for a short time, in a state of *trial* or *probation*, and soon to be removed into another world of *happiness* or *misery*, according to the part he acts here. Keep this in mind and observe how the expression is made use of by the wise man; he does not say it is more agreeable to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, but it is better. Viewing man as an immortal creature destined for eternal *happiness* or *misery*, and possessing a vivid remembrance of the impressions made on his own mind by his

attendance at these places, he gives the preference to the former; it is as though he had said: "it is better to mortify your members which are upon the earth, to take up your cross and follow Christ, to live *sobberly, righteously* and *godly* in this present world, and in the end obtain *everlasting* life, than to live wantonly in *rioting* and *drunkenness*, in *chambering* and *wantonness*, and after a few short years spent in such unsatisfying pleasures, be compelled to stand before the awful bar of God, to be judged according to the deeds done in the body, and be cast out into outer darkness where there is weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth."

That we may the better understand our text, we shall now endeavour to describe the house of *mourning* and the house of *feasting*.

Come, then, with me to the house of mourning. Death has entered, and we stand as it were in his presence chamber; who will not *fear* and *quake* before him? In the *pale* and *stiffened* corpse we see the end of all flesh. Here we find the infant, and the hoary head, the school boy and the full grown man, the sober and the drunkard, the *high* and *low*, the *rich* and *poor*, the *wise* and *foolish*, the *beautiful* and the *deformed*; *all, all*, proclaim the *solemn* and *affecting* truth, that "*flesh* is as *grass*, and the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field; the grass *withereth*, the flower *fadeth*, because the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass."

All in their turn come here, for this is the house appointed for *all* living; who can enter and not feel the *vanity* of all *earthly* pursuits? Who can enter and not reflect that it is a *solemn thing to die*? Who can enter and not feel the truth of that saying of the wise man: "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better."

When in the house of mourning you look upon the young cut off by death, reflect that you are never too young to die. Have you the care of children, be careful to prepare them for their *heavenly* inheritance; "in the *morning* sow thy seed, and in the *evening* withhold not thy hand." "When thou walkest by the *way*, and when thou sittest in the *house*," let it be your constant study to bring them up in the *nature* and *admonition* of the Lord;" then, if God sees good to take them to himself

in early youth, you will not mourn as those who have no hope, but your eyes and thoughts will be turned heavenward, you will forget those things that are *behind* and press forward, and, when the hour of your departure is at hand, the dear ones who have gone before will extend their longing arms, and welcome you to the mansions of bliss.

When in the house of mourning you see the full grown man stretched out before you, reflect that sooner or later death must conquer all, that the strength of man is not his safety, that the Lord alone can deliver from this cruel enemy. so that it may be truly said: "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." Alas, how many when they see the young cut off by death strive to account for it in some way lest it should be thought a warning to themselves; perchance they will tell you it was an accident. What then? Are you free from accidents, young man? No, but I hope to escape; and did not he, the victim that lies prostrate before you, did he not hope also? Assuredly he did, and could those pale lips speak they would tell you that he also, like you, was putting the evil day afar off; he knew that every sin he committed needed repentance, and he had determined to repent; but when? he forgot that the Scripture says: "To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts." To-morrow was the day he had set apart for repentance, to-morrow he had determined to begin to walk with God. But where is to-morrow? is it not in the womb of the future? And what is to-morrow? is it not a beacon on the furthest battlements of hell, and do not the fiery waves of the burning lake roll between us and it? Go thy way, young man, but forget not that *to-day* is the wise man's portion; "son, go work to-day in My vineyard."

When you see the old laid out before you cold in death, endeavour to learn a profitable lesson from their ashes; reflect on his life; if it has been well spent, what a glorious reward he is now enjoying; he sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things have been added unto him. He preferred *eternity* to *time*; strong in faith he looked not at the things which are seen, which are *temporal*, but at the things which are not seen, which are *eternal*; remembering that this was not *his rest*, he journeyed *through life*

as through a pilgrimage, finding it impossible to serve *two* masters; he was willing to *die* unto the world that he might *live* to Christ, and he, being dead, yet speaketh and saith to thee: "Go *thou* and do likewise."

When you look on the ashes of the *old* and *wicked* in the house of mourning, reflect that men for the most part end as they begin; if they indulge in sin when they are *young*, commonly they cease not from it when they are *old*. Let not the young then put off their repentance to some *future* period, which may *never* arrive; let them not think that their hindrances will be *fewer* and their helps *greater*, but rather let them fear lest their hearts should be *hardened* through the *deceitfulness* of sin.

When in the house of mourning you stand by the lifeless body of the drunkard, reflect on the deceitfulness of *that* sin, how many *mighty*, how many *learned*, how many kind hearted men have been led captive by Satan at his will. by means of *strong* drink; reflect that they were all at one time *moderate* drinkers. Art thou *stronger* than Noah? Art thou *better* than he? Then be wise, and say not I will drink and it shall not hurt me, but flee thou temptation, and that shall be thy wisdom.

Are the ashes of the great before you in the house of mourning, read in them the vanity of all *earthly* things, the *impotence* of man in the day of the Lord's anger; how are the *mighty* fallen! Can *riches* deliver? Can *powerful* friends rescue us from *death*? "What then shall it profit a man if he gain the *whole* world and *lose* his *own* soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his *soul*?" Man cannot redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.

Lastly, when you stand before the ashes of the lovely, reflect that beauty too is vain, it cannot profit; death is *blind* to beauty, *deaf* to the voice of music; he turns not aside to the *right* hand or to the *left*; in vain do weeping children implore for a dying parent; *stern* and *cruel* to the last, death mocks at the miseries of man.

But turn with me, and let us enter the house of *feasting*; here we find not *only* the *young* and *thoughtless*, but the old also, having no object in life but *pleasure*, and striving to spend the time as pleasantly as they can. Afraid to look

back on the *past* with *all its crimes*, afraid to be alone with conscience, they rush into scenes of pleasure. They take *no note of time*, to them it seemed to move *too slowly*. Oh could they but see some *stationary* object, they could judge better of the rapid flow of the stream on which they are embarked; did they but know the *perils* of the voyage, it would be their wisdom to provide all things *fitting* for their journey, and above all a *pilot* well acquainted with the *rocks* and *shoals* through which they have to pass. "Oh that they were *wise*, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end," but alas they are a foolish people, they love the world and its pleasures, and they cannot bear to think of leaving it; they hope to live 20 or 30 years longer, and they are intoxicated when they think of the amount of pleasure they may enjoy during that time. "But if a man live *many* years, and *rejoice* in them *all*, yet let him remember the days of *darkness*; for they shall be many." Would that the blessing of a prosperous condition might prove favourable to devotion; and that, when men were happy in themselves, and saw nothing but happiness *around* them, they might not fail gratefully to acknowledge that God who giveth them all things *richly* to enjoy. Yet such is their corruption that they are never more ready to forget their *benefactor* than when loaded with his *benefits*. The giver is concealed from their *careless* and *inattentive* view by the cloud of his *own* gifts. When their life continues to flow in one *smooth* current unruffled by any griefs; when they neither receive in their own circumstances, nor allow themselves to receive from the circumstances of others, any admonitions of human instability, they not only become regardless of providence, but are in great danger of despising it, glorious in their strength, and lifted up by the pride of life into supposed *independence*. That *impious* sentiment, if not uttered by the *mouth* yet too often *lurks* in the *heart* of *many* during their flourishing periods: What is the Almighty that we should *serve Him*? And what shall we have if we pray unto Him? If such be the tendency of the house of feasting, how necessary it is that, by some change in their situation, men should be obliged to enter into the house of mourning in order to recover a proper sense of their *depend-*

ent state! It is *there*, when forsaken by the gaities of the world and left *alone* with God, that we are made to perceive how *awful* His government is; how easily human greatness bends before Him; and how quickly all our *designs* and *measures* at His word vanish into *nothing*. Then, when the countenance is *sad* and the affections are softened by grief; when we sit alone, engaged in *serious* thought, looking down as from some *eminence* on those *dark* clouds that hang over the life of man, the *arrogance* of prosperity is humbled and the heart melts under the *impressions* of religion. Formerly we were *taught*, but now we *see*, we *feel*, how much we stand in need of an *Almighty* protector amidst the changes of this vain world.

In our text the house of mourning and the house of feasting are spoken of as two separate places, and such would seem to have been the case in the days of Solomon, but such is not always the case now, for men are found so devoid of shame, or fear, as to turn the house of mourning itself into a house of feasting; we allude to the barbarous practice so common amongst us of waking the dead. When a man dies his neighbours in the evening repair to this house, not to comfort the widow, but to devour her substance by riotous living; not to learn wisdom from the dead; not to read the Bible in the ears of those assembled, but to talk on worldly subjects. Oh how has Satan blinded your eyes! the end of all flesh has come before you, yet you lay it not to heart. Oh foolish people, shall the dead speak and warn you of the fatal consequences of continuing in sin, and will you not listen to the voice, will you drink until you are drunken in the very presence of death? But, perhaps, you are in bondage through fear; oh, then, yours is a sad case; you are not prepared to meet the last enemy; yet not so sad as some who have gone unprepared to meet their God. Why should the living man complain since space is still given him to repent? Let me entreat you then, think of death, and prepare to meet it, for sooner or later it will surely come; it will not tarry. "Repent, so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Come to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" He waits to be gracious, He is exalted to have mercy. If man was doomed to *eternal* death, and there was no arm stretched out to save, we would

not blame him for making the most of the *present* life. "Let us *eat* and *drink*, for to-morrow we die," would be a maxim which we might approve; but when it is proclaimed from heaven: "Let the wicked forsake *his way*, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*, let him turn to the Lord and He will have *mercy* upon him, and to our God, and He will *abundantly pardon*," how shall we escape if we continue in sin.

Blessed be God, there is One Who has *conquered* death, and taken away his *sting*; and to all who believe on Him, such is the power that He not only takes away the dread of this *cruel* enemy, but enables us to look upon Him as a *friend*, sent to deliver us from the burden of the flesh. Is not death the *very gate* of heaven to the believer? To him to *live is Christ*, and to *die is gain, eternal gain*.

SEEKING FOR GOLD.

Genesis, 2nd Chap., 12th Verse.

“The gold of that land is good.”

MOSES, the inspired penman of this portion of Holy Writ, is endeavouring, in the chapter from which our text is taken, to give his countrymen some idea of the situation of the garden of Eden, that delightful abode, in which our first parents dwelt before they sinned; he enumerates the rivers by which it was watered, and the countries through which they flowed. Speaking of Havilah, he merely remarks in passing that it is a region in which gold abounds, and that the gold of that land is good. I hardly need mention that gold is a metal which in certain countries of the earth is found sometimes under, and sometimes on the surface; that on account of its many valuable properties, it is much sought after; indeed it has been truly said that “gold is power,” for they who have it in abundance can at any moment command the services of thousands.

But when I begin to speak of gold, and of the countries where it is found in abundance, your thoughts will naturally carry you to Frazer River or to California. The gold mines of this country have been discovered but a few years, and yet, the news has reached the most distant quarters of the earth. It was the interest of those who first made the discovery to keep it secret, but gradually the news leaked out. First, we had uncertain rumours, marvellous stories from that distant land; day by day they gathered strength, the newspapers were full of them. Some who had friends in that country received letters, stating that the report was true. Last of all came the men themselves, laden with the precious metal. Thus the chain of evidence was completed, and all men were at length convinced that the gold of that land was both *plentiful* and *good*. Now, mark the effect it had on many: the servant came to his master and said, “Pay me that thou owest, for I will

seek this country." The farmer stopped his plough, sold his farm, bid adieu to his neighbours and departed. The *merchant*, the *lawyer*, the *doctor*, each neglecting the prospects held out to them in their native land, gathered all together and took their journey into that far country. Young men, forsaking their fathers' houses and the loved companions of their youth, went forth. But I need not enlarge, suffice it to say that the most tender ties were broken, husbands forsook their wives, parents their children, children their parents, brothers their sisters; so that, what a certain poet says concerning death might well be applied here:

"Friend after friend departs.

Who hath not lost a friend?"

Our Lord said in a certain place: "If a man come to me, and hate not his *father*, and *mother*, and *wife*, and *children*, and *brethren*, and *sisters*, yea, and his own *life also*, he *cannot* be my disciple." Many persons think that this is requiring too much, although they know that Christ has promised an eternal inheritance to all on these terms. Now, it would appear that these are the very terms on which gold is to be had in California; but can any number of men be found so void of reason as to accept it on these terms? Yes, *thousands* and *tens* of thousands have gone forth, braving perils by sea and land; they knew that *disease* and *death* were in the way; they knew that *hunger* and *thirst* would waste them; they heard the savage Indians war cry; they saw his tomahawk-bathed in blood; the bodies of many of their companions lay unburied on the road; yet *none of these things* moved them, *onward* they went, determined to reach the golden mines, or *perish* in the attempt. Many did *perish*. The remnant, *few* and *feeble*, began at once to reap their golden harvest; but disease came, and hovered o'er them like a mist. Robbers prowled nightly round their tents, and as their *gold* increased, so did their *danger*. He was counted a happy man among them, who, having made his fortune, reached his home in safety. Many, having spent their *all*, returned to lay their bones beside their fathers' bones.

These men fell into a *great* and fundamental error, they set their affections on *earthly* things; they forgot that *first* and *great* commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,

with all thy *heart*, and with all thy *soul*, and with all thy *strength*, and with all thy *mind*." Had they set their affections on things which are above, had they made all these sacrifices that they might obtain a *better resurrection*; then, we could not too highly *commend* them, or walk too closely in their footsteps; but as it is, it is my duty to warn you against their choice, for a man may think too much of what he shall *eat*, and what he shall *drink*, and wherewithal he shall be *clothed*; but while I would warn you against their choice, I would entreat you to remember how *firmly*, how *perseveringly*, how *courageously* they walked in *that path* which they thought the *right* one, and counseling you to seek first the kingdom of *God*, and His *righteousness*, I would say to you, go, and imitate their *firmness*, their *perseverance*, their *courage*.

For more than a thousand years, men of *understanding* and *integrity* have traversed the earth, in its *length* and *breadth*, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and informing *high* and *low*, *rich* and *poor*, that *far away*, in the *deep blue sky*, there is a *happy land*, "where the wicked *cease* from troubling and the weary are at *rest*." Where God shall wipe away all tears, and there shall be no more death, neither *sorrow* nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Brethren, I am convinced that I bring no strange tidings to your ears; you have doubtless heard all this before; as Christians you profess to believe it. Let me ask, has it brought any change in your conduct? Are you prepared to enter this happy land? How is it, that while thousands and tens of thousands are rushing forward to the golden mines, so few are seeking an entrance into the kingdom of God? Let us then for a few moments consider the advantages gained and the sacrifices called for by an entrance into either of these countries. Would you go to the golden mines of California? you cannot go for nothing, you must provide sufficient to pay your expenses; thus the poor are excluded from the land. Would you enter the kingdom of heaven? there is nothing to hinder you from doing so; the way is open, Christ is that way: "Come unto Me," He says, "all ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." "The spirit and the

bride say come, and let him that heareth say come, and let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Would you go to the golden mines of California? you must be prepared to brave *danger, disease* and *death*, you cannot escape them; whichever way you turn, they will meet you. Would you seek the kingdom of God? I know of no danger to which your person will be exposed; you may live in the most healthy climate; you will not it is true escape death, neither will you desire to do so, for to you "to die will be gain." Death is the *swift* and *gallant* ship which the Lord will send to convey the believer to that distant country, of which alone it can be truly said, "The gold of that land is good."

Would you go to the golden mines of California? let me tell you what you are sure of: you will be *sure* to have expenses, you will be *sure* to break many tender ties, you will be *sure* to meet *danger, disease* and *death*; you will be sure of these things, but I can insure you nothing else; you *may* collect a little *gold*, you *may* be very *successful*, you *may* make your *fortune*, but it is *uncertain*, your prospects of gain are *uncertain*, your losses, your dangers are *certain*.

Now, would you enter the kingdom of God? there is no uncertainty here; no man ever yet set himself heartily to seek admittance and was refused. Hear the words of the Saviour: "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."

Would you go to California? you *may* be very fortunate, you *may* accumulate much, but how long can you hold it? Oh, that is the question. How long? It may be a few years, a few months, a few weeks, I cannot tell, it is *uncertain*; I know you must soon will it to another, you have no more than a life interest in it.

But you will say: What is all this to us? we never went to California, we never had any thought of going. It may be so, and yet all that I have said may concern you very much; you may be just as fond of gold, just as eager in pursuit of it, although you went not. Oh, if men were only half as anxious

to enter into the kingdom of Heaven as they are to lay up treasure on earth, I believe that few would miss it. But while they are *diligent* in business, they are *not* fervent in spirit, they do *not* serve the Lord.

Brethren, I would have you constantly remember that there is a crown of gold which fadeth not away; a mansion in bliss prepared for all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, who believe on Him, and keep His commandments. This is *certain*; God has *said it*; it rests upon the word of Him Who cannot *lie*. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye *steadfast, unmoveable*; always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Brethren, those among you who are seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to you I would say rejoice, for "ye have in heaven a more *enduring* substance, a house not made with hands." Ye have, indeed, chosen the *good part* which shall *never be* taken away. Millions and millions of ages shall roll away, yet the golden crown upon your brow shall not wax *dim*, the many mansions in your Father's house will not *decay*. Oh, think of this, and press forward in your Christian course; press forward to that happy land where pleasures shall never cease, where gold shall be as dust beneath your feet, and ye shall sit on thrones of glory.

It was a good report which the Queen of Sheba heard in her own land of the wisdom and glory of Solomon. It lessened her attachment to home, and prompted her to undertake a long journey to visit this greater king, of whom she had heard so much. She *went*, and she was *not* disappointed. Great as the expectations were which she had formed from the revelation made her by others, they fell short of what she *saw* and *heard* herself when she was admitted into his presence. Good, likewise, is the report of the Gospel. It has a powerful effect upon those who receive it by faith. It is abundantly sufficient to convince them of the comparative insignificance of all that they most admire and esteem in this world. From that *hour* they become *strangers* and *pilgrims* upon earth. They set out in the way which God has prescribed, in hopes of seeing Him who is greater than Solomon.

And the report they have heard of Him is their *subject*, their *song*, their *joy*, while they are on their journey, and their great *support* under the difficulties they meet with on the road. What then will it be to see Him as He is? As yet, the one half is not told them; or at least they are not yet capable of conceiving the half of what they read in the Scripture concerning His wisdom, His glory, His grace. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive *power*, and *riches*, and *wisdom*, and *strength*, and *honour*, and *glory*, and *blessing*." We weaken rather than enlarge the sense of such a passage as this by our feeble comments. We must die before we can understand it. To the majority of mankind, "wait the great teacher death," is *cold*, is *dangerous* advice. If they are not taught by the gospel while they live, the teaching of death will be *too late*. Dreadful will be the condition of those who cannot be convinced of their mistakes till repentance and amendment will be impracticable.

But death will be a great teacher, indeed, to a believer; he will then know more by a *glance*, and in a *moment*, of the happiness he is now expecting; than by all he could collect from the inquiry and experience of a long course of years in this world. Then he will be assured that "the gold of that land is good," since in that heavenly country "neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, nor do thieves break through and steel;" and as he takes possession and enjoys those treasures of the Eternal City he will exclaim: "Though whilst in the flesh I heard much concerning the good things which were in store for the faithful, still the half was not told me."

NOTHING MORE VALUABLE THAN THE SOUL.

St. Matt., 16th Chap., 26th Verse.

"What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

IT is related of a celebrated but eccentric preacher that on one occasion, when a great crowd had gathered to hear him, he took for his text these words: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Slowly and solemnly he repeated the text three times; then closed his Bible and sat down; the sermon, if I may so call it, was ended; he offered no word of comment, but dropped the pure word of God into the minds of his hearers, and left it there to work. We are not told how the congregation felt; some, no doubt, were astonished, some annoyed, and very many excited to anger. The preacher, however, had accomplished his object, a striking text of Scripture had been imprinted on the mind of every individual present; and believe me, my friends, it is an important point to get a striking text of Scripture firmly fixed on the mind of a congregation, causing it to rise up before it from day to day, and from hour to hour, in the place of business, in the haunts of pleasure, or it may be of vice, breaking in upon us in the still hour of midnight, as we rest on our beds listening to the measured tick of the clock, conscious that each tick brings us one step nearer to the awful future, to that unknown country of which we think so little and know so little, but to which we are all hastening with railway speed. In the still hour of midnight, darkness surrounding us, the world shut out, the presence of God felt, oh, who can estimate the power of such a text as this breaking in upon the mind, coming to us as the very voice of God himself, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," and I can fancy the soul in these solitary musings communing with itself thus: "To perish," what does that mean? Does it mean to cease to exist? To die as the beasts around us die? Or does it mean to be

shut out from life and light forever? To be separated from the dear ones whom we loved on earth forever. To be consigned to some dark and solitary prison, where we shall hear no more the sweet tones of the human voice, but every sound that breaks upon the ear is harsh and discordant, as though the very fiends of hell were groaning forth an anthem to the mighty spirit of evil. Oh if this be to perish, save us, save us from that doom. And then the full text of the preacher breaks in upon the mind: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Except ye repent," then there is an exception, then there is a way of escape, a door of hope. Repentance is that door, but what is repentance? Oh that the preacher had dwelt on that point. And then to the mind well versed in Scripture memory brings back the story of the Jewish youth who left the shelter of his father's house and wandered into a far country to see life. He was rich, and many young men gathered round him to teach him how to spend his money. It is an old story, but we see it re-enacted every day. They had for a season what the world would call a gay time of it, but in the course of a few years his money was dissipated. And in the ordering of Providence, a mighty famine arose upon that land and he began to be in want. He may have thought of his father's house then, but pride would not allow him to return. He sank lower and lower in the social scale till he reached the very bottom. He became a swineherd, and his master sent him forth in the fields to feed swine; and as day by day hunger gnawed upon his vitals, he was tempted to eat of the very husks that the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him, not one of the many who had shared his bounty in that far country had the will and the power to help him. His pride was broken, he could sink no lower. And then a sweet vision of his father's house, the home of his youth, broke in upon him; and he saw, or fancied that he saw, his aged father stretching forth his arms to receive him. His resolution was taken: "I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him: father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son." This is *repentance*; know ye aught of this? Baptised Christians who have wandered far from your Heavenly Father's house,

wandered into a world of sin and pleasure, where ye have drunk deeply of its intoxicating cup, know ye aught of this, a growing dissatisfaction with the world and its pleasures, and a longing for the peaceful rest of heaven? Has your soul begun to loathe the best food the world has to offer? Has it ever come into your minds to say, "I will arise and go to my best robe and put it on him, the royal robe of the elder brother, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This is repentance. This is the golden key that unlocks the outer gate of heaven. Do ye possess it, advance boldly; draw near in faith to the inner gate, and you shall hear the voice of your Heavenly Father saying, bring forth the best robe and put it on him; the royal robe of the elder brother, the righteousness of Christ, the law fulfiller, and clothed in that garment of purest white you shall be counted worthy to enter into the New Jerusalem, and to sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; you shall stand unabashed before the very throne of purity itself, perfect in His sight, in whose eyes the very heavens are not clean, and who chargeth His angels with folly.

But it is time we dropped the text of the celebrated preacher and returned to our own: "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Now we do not believe that we could ever be tempted to imitate the example of the celebrated but eccentric preacher of whom we have spoken; but if we could, this is the text we should choose for the occasion; this is the text we would seek to impress on the mind of every business man in this congregation: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This is the text we would seek to write in letters large and plain on every leaf of every ledger of every man of business in this great country, and if we could induce him to promise that he would read it carefully and prayerfully each morning before he commenced his work, we on our part would promise that the world would never get entire possession of his heart. This is the text of Scripture which, slightly modified, we should like to print in letters of gold on the walls of every room where sits the woman of fashion, that whichever way she turned it would meet her view: "What

shall a woman be profited though her whole life be one round of pleasure, if she lose her own soul?" But why should I confine the text to any particular class, it is suitable for all; none (not even the most thoughtless) can read it without being seriously impressed, for it reminds us that the things we desire, and pursue, and grasp are perishing, the soul we barter for them is immortal.

Now it may strike some of you that the text might have been differently worded: "What shall a man be profited if he gain \$10,000, \$20,000 or \$100,000 and lose his own soul?" But inasmuch as there may be young men just entering on life, who hope by diligence and untiring industry to accumulate larger sums than these, the Almighty meets them on the very threshold of life with this question, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The world is a creature of time, it can only be enjoyed while it exists, but this is not the worst view of the case; our life is short, our time in the world is limited, and it is only for that brief space that the world if possessed can be enjoyed. Suppose that you had not to gain the world, but that it came to you as an inheritance from your fathers. Still your enjoyment of it must be short; three score years and ten is the allotted life of man. You will observe that in the text there is no promise made of health; the world and the world only is offered as the price of the soul. But oh! what is wealth, what is honour, what the possession of the whole world, without health? Do we not each one of us know some rich man so afflicted with disease that he would gladly part with all that he possesses if by so doing he could secure health; gladly exchange conditions with the healthy day labourer. We might press this argument, for it is important, but we forbear; we will go further than the text, we will throw in health, and the text shall read thus: "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, possess a healthy body to enjoy it, and lose his own soul?" The possession of the world given, and a good stock of health added, oh how rapidly would the years run round; how swiftly would they hurry our mortal life to an end; how speedily should we reach the goal, the 70th year. But stay, who told you you would live seventy years? We

have given you the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; we have promised you health to enjoy them, but we have said nothing as yet about length of days; your life is uncertain for aught you know, for aught we know this terrible sentence may at any moment ring in your ears: "This night thy soul is required of thee." Oh, who could enjoy wealth, or pleasure, or fame, who felt he was unprepared to die, and knew not at what moment the sword of divine justice would strike. We have been liberal with you in the past, we have thrown in health, because the possession of the world without it was of no use to you. We propose to be more liberal still. We will add length of days, you shall enjoy the world and health 70 years. We will suppose that one-half of that time has passed, and you are looking back upon it. How do you like your bargain now? Have you had as much enjoyment of the world as you anticipated? Alas! of what use is it for a man to possess all the luxuries of the world, seeing that his capacities of enjoyment are so limited? He can only eat or drink a certain quantity, if he exceeds that his appetite fails, and for a time he loathes the very sight of food. And so it is with the other pleasures of life, his very servants have in this respect as much enjoyment of life as he has for they have as much as they can enjoy, and although he has more, he cannot enjoy it.

Again, if we possessed all the kingdoms of the world, we should need extended powers of vision to enable us properly to enjoy them. Placed above the world, with an eye of sufficient range I can imagine the happy owner, happy for a time, spending many pleasant hours in the contemplation of its beauties, as it rolled beneath his feet.

My friends, if Satan had the power, and would make us an offer thus large: "You shall possess the world and health to enjoy it for seventy years, on the understanding that at the end of that time you will come and dwell with me forever in the dreary mansions of the lost;" do you think that there could be found on the face of this fair earth a wretch so utterly hopeless and forlorn that he would accept the hard bargain? But Satan never did make this offer to any but one of the souls of men, and he the representative man of the

race, the Lord Jesus Christ. Satan could afford to offer him all to bribe him from the path of duty, for his captivity meant the captivity of the whole race. One stain of sin on the Lamb of God, the sacrifice the Almighty had prepared for the redemption of a lost world, and man's last ray of hope had been quenched in utter darkness.

Satan, as I have said, never made the offer but to one of the souls of men. He could not afford to do it; the world, its pleasure, and sins, are the facts by means of which he catches and draws souls to perdition. And, oh, it is sad to think how easily men are led astray from the path of duty. A little money, a little sinful pleasure, a little fame, presented at the proper time and place have effected the overthrow of thousands. The business man who in his calmer moments would reject with unutterable scorn Satan's offer of the whole world as the price of his soul, will in an unguarded hour, to secure a desired object, do something which will (if not repented of) as effectually exclude him from the kingdom of heaven as though he had formed a league with Satan. And thus it comes to pass that men and women, day by day, part with their souls for paltry considerations, for Satan knows, if we do not, that the smallest sin unrepented of secures the soul to him as effectually as though he had given worlds for its purchase. "Let us watch, then, and pray, that we enter not into temptation."

THE FINAL JUDGMENT.

2 Corinth., Chap. 5, Verse 10.

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ."

ST. LUKE informs us that the Athenians and strangers which were at Athens "spent their time in nothing else but either to *tell* or to *hear* some new thing." And are there not many professing Christians of whom this could be said with equal truth? They read their Bibles frequently, but, passing over those passages which are plain and easily understood, they dive into the mysterious in search of something new; the consequence is their understanding is exercised, but their heart is none the better. Oh, if men would only give their attention to the plain parts of Scripture, if they would only endeavour to live up to the light which God has given them, what a different world this would be! But it seems to be an artifice of Satan's to persuade men that all is well so long as they are reading their Bibles; but, know this, that not the *hearer*, or *reader* or *expounder* of the law is justified, but the *DOER*, he alone is justified.

Brethren, we bring no strange tidings to your ears this day; we preach no new doctrine, for it is as old as Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who prophesied saying: "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment upon all." Now, although there is nothing new, nothing mysterious, yet there is an awful truth contained in these words: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Happy is that man who, being fully persuaded that what God hath promised, or threatened, He will surely perform, shall frequently meditate on that day, and prepare to meet his God, when he cometh to judgment. Happy he who is in the daily practice of sitting in judgment on his conduct and condemning himself whenever he perceives he has gone astray from God's commandments. Brethren, "if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

Let us now give ourselves to the consideration of the words of the text, and may the Holy Spirit of God be with us, and bless us; may He open our understandings to understand this portion of Scripture; may He soften our hearts and prepare them to receive the good seed.

Let us consider, first, the time of judgment; second, the Judge; third, the persons who shall be judged; fourth, the judgment seat.

First, the time of judgment. That there is a set time for this we learn from St. Paul, who in his discourse before the Athenians tells us that God "hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world;" how near or how distant that day may be is hid alike from men and angels. Now, although we know not the time when the Son of man shall come to judgment, which is a secret known only to the Most High, yet from Scripture it would appear that the coming of our Lord to judgment will be the signal for the destruction of the world. St. Paul tells us that "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up."

Are any surprised that the day of judgment should be so long delayed, let them remember that this will not prevent the faithful Christian from entering into rest; the soul of Lazarus was carried at once into Abraham's bosom—a place of happiness. Neither will it delay the punishment of the wicked; the rich man was no sooner dead than we read "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment."

But you will say, if this be true, if the soul as soon as it is separated from the body goes to its appointed place, what need is there of a day of judgment? Is not sentence already passed?

We must not suppose that God will be better able to pronounce judgment at the last day than at the present time. It is not that He waits the appearance of certain witnesses; it is not that His knowledge will be greater then; but it hath pleased Him that those who have sinned before all should be condemned before all. It hath pleased Him that those who

have confessed Christ before men should be acknowledged by Him before men and angels. Another reason why judgment is deferred till the end of the world is because no man can know the exact amount of harm or good he has done until that time arrives. Then, if a man has written or distributed an immoral book, it shall be revealed to him how many have read it, and what evil it has done, how it has corrupted their morals and lead them far from God. Then, if a man has lived a wicked life, if by his example he has encouraged others in sin, it shall be revealed to him how much evil he has done, and he shall be punished accordingly.

Then the father of a family who lived a wicked life will be surprised when thousands of his posterity blame him as the author of their ruin; he neglected to bring up his children in the fear of God; they grew up to man's estate; they married and had families whom they were unable to instruct in religion, and so on to the end of time, and now all this evil will be charged upon him. Then, if a man has written or distributed a good book, it will be revealed to him how many have been converted, how many refreshed, how many strengthened by it.

Then if a man has lived as a Christian; if he has endeavoured by his example, by his words, by his actions, to lead men to a knowledge of the truth; if he has diligently improved the talent which God has given him, it shall be revealed how his labours of love have been blessed.

But, brethren, let this suffice; we will not go through all ranks and classes of men, and show how they shall each be punished or rewarded for the good or evil they have done after death, by their books, by their laws, by their paintings, by their songs, by their actions, by their words.

We come, now, in the second place to speak of the Judge; the words of our text are plain and decisive on this point: "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." Yes, He Who once came among us in the form of a servant, Who had not where to lay his head, He Who was once brought before the judgment seat of Pilate, charged with blasphemy, who was scourged, spit upon, and at last crucified, even Him hath God exalted to be Judge of quick and dead.

Are any of you saying in your hearts, we will not have this Man to reign over us? Are any of you crucifying Him afresh by your sins and putting Him to an open shame? Oh, tremble, for the day is rapidly approaching when the Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and then He will say, where are those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them here and slay them under My feet.

But, brethren, let me hope that many of you will be rejoiced to hear that Christ will be your Judge; let me hope that many of you know Him already as the sinner's Friend, *the Saviour*, the *Redeemer*; then that day which will be so full of terror to the wicked will be a happy day for you, and while they are endeavouring to hide themselves in the clefts of the rocks, and calling upon the mountains to cover them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, you will have nothing to fear, for in the Judge you will recognize a Friend "Whom having not seen you loved;" He shall send His angel to gather you from among the wicked; you shall be caught up into the clouds to be forever with the Lord.

We proceed in the third place to speak of the persons who shall be judged; these are of two classes, angels and men. That angels shall appear at the judgment seat of Christ we learn from St. Jude, who tells us that: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Also from St. Peter who says: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

But they will not be the only persons judged; in proof of this we need only refer you to our text, where St. Paul tells us, "We must *all* appear before the judgment seat of Christ." None of the family of Adam shall be wanting; those who lived in the remotest periods of antiquity shall mingle with those who shall then be alive on the earth, and who shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye. Tribes of the earth most remote one from another in situation, and most dissimilar in colour, customs and habits, shall then be gathered into one

vast assembly: "For we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." The king shall meet once more the subjects whom he cruelly oppressed ; the lawyer, the clients whom he fleeced ; the minister, the people whom he neglected ; the rich, the poor who starved at his gate ; the father, the children whom he should have instructed ; the children, the parents whom they disobeyed: all, all, shall meet once more round the seat of judgment, and then, perhaps, part forever ; for He that sitteth upon the throne shall divide that countless multitude into two parts, sheep and goats, saints and sinners ; there will then be no neutral ground to stand upon, and each of us will be compelled to join one or other of those companies, but which ? Shall we be permitted to join that goodly company arrayed in white robes who shall stand on the right hand of the Judge, and to whom He will say, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" or shall we be compelled to join that terror-stricken company which shall stand on the left hand, and to whom he shall say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." "I saw," says St. John, "the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works, and the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their work."

We proceed in the fourth place to consider the judgment seat.

There are different courts among men, some possessing more and some less authority ; and we fear to be brought before these, just in proportion as we know their power to be great or small. When a man has committed murder, and is brought before the earthly tribunal appointed to try such criminals, what crowded courts do we usually find ! Men sit in awful suspense while witness after witness is examined, and when at last the judge has delivered his charge, and the jury have retired, how anxiously do they wait to see the end. All is silent as the grave while the foreman pronounces guilty or

not guilty; if the prisoner be found guilty, the judge proceeds at once to pass sentence; he has forfeited his life, and he must die; he must soon close his eyes forever on this world. This is the greatest punishment that man can inflict; he can kill the body, but there his power ceases, he has no power to hurt the soul. Now, brethren, we would have you turn and take a view of the judgment seat of Christ; we would not have you spend all your sympathy on others to the neglect of yourselves; remember that you also are criminals, and that the day is rapidly approaching in which you will have to stand before the judgment seat of God; do not attempt to put me off, saying you know this; I want you to *feel* it, to *realize* it. The fear of an earthly tribunal keeps many from crime; how much more would the judgment seat of Christ deter them from sin did they keep it constantly before their eyes.

This world, my brethren, can be compared to nothing so fitly as to a prison house; it contains nothing but criminals. The sinner may think it a large prison; he may flatter himself that no eye sees; he may think that he can escape the hand of the Judge, but He that sitteth in the Heavens laugheth him to scorn, and when his time is come, when he has filled up the measure of his iniquities, Death, the constable of that High Court, will find him out, and drag him to the judgment seat of Christ. But, here, brethren, the tongue of men and angels might well fail; who is sufficient for these things? Who can do justice to the scene? What language can describe the terrors of the wicked in that day, when they shall see "The Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." "I saw," says St. John, "a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them." Inanimate nature is described as being terrified at his presence; how then can the "heart of the wicked endure, or their hands be strong in the day the Lord shall deal with them?" "If one man sin against another the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?"

Brethren, we come not here this afternoon to convince you that you must shortly stand before an earthly tribunal, having power to imprison, torture and kill the body, to separ-

ate you from all who are near and dear to you, but we come to announce to you a truth a thousand times more solemn and more awful, and that is, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;" if found guilty then, pain must be our everlasting portion, for when once the sentence has been pronounced, it cannot be reversed; there is no appeal from this court; age after age shall drag slowly on, millions of years shall pass away, but hope shall never enter those dreary abodes: "hath God said, and shall He not do it; hath He spoken, and shall He not bring it to pass." And now, brethren, do you ask why I set these things before you? Is it that I may take away sleep from your eyes and slumber from your eyelids? Is it that I may render you more miserable than you are at present? Is it because I love you not? No, brethren, no, it is for none of these reasons. It is that I may deliver my own soul, and that yours also may be saved; it is that we may meet with joy around the judgment seat, and not with sorrow, for that were unprofitable for *you* and for *me*. It is that when the Judge shall demand, "Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?" I may be able to answer: "Here am I and the children whom Thou hast given me." Brethren, did I know your ruin was inevitable, did I see no way of escape, I would lay my hand upon my mouth, I would keep silence before you, I would say ignorance is bliss, but now it is not so, for I know there is a way of escape; I know you may be saved if you can but be convinced of your danger. For the word of God says: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon;" and again: "There is now therefore no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Come, then, let me entreat you to be reconciled to God; then shall that day which is so full of terror to the ungodly be a joyful day to you; you shall stand at the right hand of the Judge: He shall smile upon you and say: "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

GOD'S SERVICE THE BEST SERVICE.

Joshua, 24th Chap., part of the 15th Verse.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

SUCH was the determination of Joshua, the son of Nun, whom God had set over the people of Israel, on the death of his servant Moses; he was one of the twelve sent to spy out the promised land, and on his return reported favourably of the country, and encouraged the people to go up and take possession, whilst the remaining eleven (with one exception), although they could say nothing against the fruitfulness of the land, terrified the children of Israel by the description they gave of the enemies they would have to encounter. Weak in faith, they thought they would never be able to overcome such fierce and warlike nations, forgetting that the same God who with a strong hand had brought them out of Egypt had also promised to put them in possession of the land of Canaan. It was with a firm trust in his promises that Joshua and Caleb exhorted the people to go up and possess the land; they did not expect to overcome the race of the giants with sword and spear, neither was it their own arm that should help them—but the rest of the spies had forgotten how God overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea; they remembered not how he plagued the Egyptians until they let his people go.

In the chapter from which our text is taken we have the final address of Joshua to the children of Israel; he goes back as far as the calling of Abraham, and enumerates some of the great things God had done for them, and concludes thus: "Now, therefore, *fear* the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or

the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

This appeal of Joshua's had the desired effect, and the people answered and said: "God forbid that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods." Joshua wished them to consider well what they were about, so he spoke to them again: "Ye cannot serve the Lord; for He is an Holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins; if ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt, and consume you after that He hath done you good. And the people said unto Joshua, nay, but we will serve the Lord." And they did serve Him for a time, for we read a few verses further on that, "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the Lord that He had done for Israel."

As the children of Israel longed to enter into the Land of Canaan, I am sure you all wish to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but your own good sense must convince you that wishing alone will never bring you there. Have you ever tried any other method? Your answer to this question will prove whether you are really in earnest. Oh, how differently do men act in temporal and eternal things. A man tells us he would like to be rich; we observe him closely, and we find his deeds in accordance with his words; he rises early, and late takes rest, and eats the bread of carefulness; he does not sit still and wish after riches, but he sets to work at once, and without delay he shows that he is in earnest; his thoughts are constantly employed in devising some new scheme how he may increase his gains. Ask the same man if he would not like to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and he will answer yes. Having received this answer, and knowing him to be a man of energy and perseverance, we expect nothing *less* than that the kingdom of heaven will suffer violence, that he will be regular in his attendance at this house of prayer, that he will devote the Sabbath to spiritual improvement, that evening and morning he will gather around him his children and servants to praise the Lord for His goodness, that he will diligently read the Holy Scriptures, and meditate therein by day and

by night. Finally, we expect that, regardless of what others may do or say, he for his part will come to the same determination as Joshua: "As for *me* and *my house*, we will serve the Lord."

Yes, if men were *consistent*, this would not be expecting *too* much, we have seen how wisely he acted when he had a worldly object in view; he has told us that he has heaven also in view, but how differently he acts; how are we to account for such inconsistent conduct? It is easily accounted for, my brethren; in one case the *heart* and *hand* go together, the world is *near*, and he can see the prize for which he is *contending*, and he is willing to *forget* that the enjoyment may be *short*. Heaven is *afar off*, and only visible to the eye of faith; its pleasures and enjoyments are not such as the carnal man delights in; to be continually praising God, what could be more distasteful to him? To be free from sin—would this be esteemed happiness by those who now find their sole pleasure in it? This at once convinces us of the necessity of what the Scripture requires: "Ye must be born again;" your whole nature must be changed; you who now delight in sin must learn to hate it; you who are fond of pleasure must live *no more unto yourselves*, but to Him who died for you, and rose again; you who now blaspheme the Holy name of God must learn to reverence it; but we fancy we hear you exclaim, who is sufficient for these things? If you feel your own weakness, we would direct you to One who is strong, who will cast out none that come to Him, and who has promised that those who come to Him "shall find rest unto their souls;" to Him we would entreat you to go, praying that He would "create in you a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within you;" but remember you must wrestle with God in prayer; you must say with Jacob: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." This is acceptable prayer. But how often are our devotions a mere form to satisfy our conscience; we know it is our duty to pray; we know that none go to heaven but men of prayer; we have been taught to pray in our youth, and, therefore, we go through the outward form; but is it not too often without the inward motion and desire of the heart toward God? Let us remember that the mere form is not only unprofitable to

the soul, but brings guilt upon it; and, when trusted in, is a dangerous delusion. It may gain us a religious name in the world; it may pacify an alarmed conscience for the moment; but it gains nothing from God. Our Lord says: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honour-eth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." And what follows? "In vain do they worship me." Religion is in a low state in the heart of that man on whom prayer must be urged as a duty. It ought ever to be considered as the greatest of all mercies that we are permitted to pray to God, and assured that "Every one that asketh receiveth."

The Christian will adopt as his own the sentiment of Joshua, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." He will not think it sufficient that he himself serves the Lord while his servants and his children go after other gods; *no*, they must all serve Him, from the least unto the greatest; his dwelling will be a place where prayer is wont to be made; no duty however pressing will be allowed to interfere with his morning or evening devotions; and, my brethren, are not some of you verily guilty in this matter, for you neither pray yourselves, nor teach your children to pray, while others think the slightest excuse a sufficient reason for neglecting the duty for the present. Some pray because they think it right; the words are pronounced with the lips, but the heart does not join in the prayer.

It is an easy thing to say, "Create in me a clean heart, oh God, and renew a right spirit within me;" but here lies the difficulty: if the heart itself does not feel unclean, it is not likely to join earnestly in the request. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

In most cases when sickness comes we are aware of it by the pain which accompanies it, but it is not so with the soul. If we neglect to provide food for our bodies before death ensues, hunger comes to warn us of our danger, but we may day after day neglect to nourish the soul with the food which God has provided for it (namely, the Holy Communion prayer, reading and meditating on the Word of God); and the same consequences will not ensue at once; you will not feel the same pain as when you starve the body. Nevertheless, you

are starving the soul, and it is gradually dying to all that is good, and in a short time it will be alive only to what is evil. We know that many persons find prayer and the reading of the Scriptures an irksome task who notwithstanding consider themselves good Christians.

We will not at present speak of those who neither pray nor read the Scriptures, who nevertheless would be greatly offended and deem us uncharitable if we refused to number them among the followers of that Jesus whose delight it was to read and meditate on what Moses and the prophets have written, who spent whole nights in prayer to God. But would you think it irksome or unpleasant for a child to come into the presence of an affectionate father to unburden his heart, to ask his advice, to thank him for favours past, to entreat him to continue still his loving kindness? The Christian is the child, and God is his Father. While a man continues in sin he cannot call God his father, but when by the grace of God he has been brought to a knowledge of his lost and perishing condition by nature, when he has fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him in the gospel, he begins in some degree to understand how God was reconciled to the world by the death of his Son. Before this he had been told that he ought not to commit sin, but sin was natural and pleasant to him; he never thought of another world, and he knew no reason why he should deny himself any pleasure, but now he feels that sin is exceeding sinful; he believes that if man had never sinned the Son of God had never suffered; when Satan tempts him to sin he pictures to himself the Son of God stretched on the cross, and he determines with God's help to forsake all sin.

He feels also that, though he has been a rebel against God all his life, he is now reconciled to Him through the blood of his Son; he who was once a rebel is now a son; he has received the spirit of adoption whereby he cries Abba, Father; he can now boldly enter into the presence of God, and make known his wants, for (although he feels himself a vile sinner) he knows that Christ has suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us near unto God. "Happy are they which are in such a case; yea happy are the people which have

the Lord for their God." Brethren, the time is short: "Choose ye whom ye will serve;" but remember, once for all, that God and the world cannot at the same time hold possession of your heart. Search and try that you may know on what your affections are placed, remembering always that where your treasure is there will your heart be also. If you have set your heart on God, whatever troubles and trials you may be called to endure while a pilgrim here below, all will be well at the last; you shall be happy in eternity, for you can say with the apostle: "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." But if on the other hand you place your hearts, your affections, on the perishable things of earth, you will never be happy, either in this world or in that which is to come, for the things of the world cannot satisfy the cravings of the immortal spirit that dwells in the meanest of the sons of earth; you will know God as your enemy. He has it in His power to render you miserable, and sometime or other He will certainly do so; how then can you hope to be happy with the wrath of God abiding on you.

Brethren, are you still in doubt as to whom you ought to serve? Have you not yet decided whether the world or God shall possess your hearts? to you the words of Joshua, the son of Nun, come with alarming force: "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Halt no longer between two opinions; if the Lord be God serve Him; but think not to put Him off with formal prayers and the strict observance of the outward ceremonies of religion, for He claims the heart; He claims the love of those who serve Him; He seeks not the service of slaves, but of children. Do you then really love God? Can you with truth say that you love Him? Not more than this or that pleasure; not more than father or mother; not more than husband or wife; not more than brother or sister; not more than glory or honour, or riches, or anything else the world has to offer, but more than all these things put together. This it is, and nothing short of this to be a Christian.

"GOD WILL SURELY PUNISH THOSE WHO FORGET HIM."

Psalms, 9th Chap., Verse 17th.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

I AM charged with a message for you to-day, a message from the great God of heaven and earth. Oh what an awful and solemn word is this which He has sent you: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Remember, it is not the minister who says this, but He against whom all your sins have been committed. But, perhaps, you will say: this message concerns not us; we are not wicked; we never worshipped idols; we never took God's name in vain; we never desecrated the Sabbath; we honoured our parents; we never committed murder or adultery or theft; we never bore false witness against our neighbour; we never coveted our neighbour's goods.

Now I do not believe that there is one person present who can with truth affirm all this. I know that many will boldly declare, "We never injured anyone;" and yet they scarce pass a day without cheating or in some way imposing on their more ignorant neighbours; besides, though you have not by fraud or violence taken away any part of his property, though you have not in any way injured his health or endangered his life, perhaps you have slandered his good name; you may not have made up mischievous stories to hurt his character, but zealously circulated them when made up, and when charged with it you have thought it sufficient excuse to be able to say: we did not make them up, we heard them; will you still plead we never injured anyone? We are not wicked?

Brethren, we are all too much in the habit of comparing ourselves with the world around us. We look round on our neighbours, we observe their faults, and they appear like beams in our eyes; then we are exalted above measure; we are placed upon an eminence; we can see the follies, the ex-

travagancies and the sins of others, but we see nothing in ourselves but what is good. Are we then such as we take ourselves to be? Are we all good without any mixture of evil? "Let God be true and every man a liar." If He be true, then mark well His words: "The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." God made the heart; He is acquainted with all its ways, and this is what He says concerning it; and all good men in every age who have watched the workings of their hearts have set to their seal, that in this, as in everything else, *God is true*.

Consider, brethren, how just, how holy, how strict God is. When Eliphaz thought on this he exclaimed: "What is man that he should be clean? And he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?"

What is man that he should be clean? Clean in the sight of a Holy God. Compare him with his fellow men, compare him with those who are forever wallowing in the mire of sin, and to mortal eyes he may appear clean; "but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do; he is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight."

Did God know only our wicked actions; were we to stand or fall by these, who might abide the day of judgment? But when we read in Scripture that "the thought of foolishness is sin;" "that for every idle word which men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment;" then our mouths are stopped, and we are found guilty before God.

Would that we were all duly impressed with the holy purity of God's law. The sixth commandment is: "Thou shalt do no murder;" which of you, when it is read every Sabbath, does not comfort himself with the thought that there is at least one of the commandments which he has never broken; you almost think it unnecessary to say: "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law." If any person should hint that there was a possibility of your breaking this commandment, you would no doubt answer him in the words of

Haziel: "Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?"

Hear now our Lord's explanation and enforce it: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is *angry* with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother *raca* shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou *fool* shall be in danger of *hell fire*."

Hear also what St. John saith: "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Oh, how many who call themselves Christians are condemned by these words of the apostle. How many come to the Lord's table with hearts full of bitterness. Brethren, when you find hatred stealing into your hearts, pray that God may give you a portion of that meek and gentle spirit which our blessed Lord possessed in such an eminent degree; "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously;" who prayed for his murderers: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." See here the meek and gentle spirit of Jesus, and remember that it is written: "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his."

Brethren, you see that the commandments of God are exceeding broad; they reach to the thoughts and intents of the heart. Do you think that, if the ten commandments were explained and enforced as the sixth has been, you could say of them as the young ruler said: "All these have I kept from my youth;" whatever you might say or whatever you might think matters little in comparison of what God says. Hear then what the spirit of God inspired St. John to write: "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Observe the expression "if we say," the Apostle evidently includes himself, and with this agrees the 15th article of our Church, which proclaims "Christ *alone* without sin." Hear what David says: "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, oh Lord; for in thy sight shall *no man living* be justified." And again: "The Lord looked down

from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek after God; they are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one?" In Genesis we read: "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Job asks the question: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" and the answer is: "Not one." David confesses "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." In proverbs the question is asked: "Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" In Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple we find this remarkable assertion: "There is no man that sinneth not." In the book of Ecclesiastes, we read: "There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

My brethren, what have you to say why judgment should not be passed against you? The word of God condemns you, for it plainly declares that "*all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" you must be wicked, for the Scripture declares: "There is *none* righteous; *no, not one.*" We have a message for you then, an awful message from the Holy God; hear it, mark it well, and let it sink deep into your hearts: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Even so, "the nations," or as it is translated in the prayer-book, "the people that forget God;" it is a sin to forget God; we should do all things to His glory; when we forget Him we fall into sin; we could not sin if He was always present to our minds; but we do not like to retain God in our knowledge, He is so holy, so just, so strict, that He will not let the smallest sin pass unpunished; therefore, we strive to forget Him that we may go on in sin.

But what is the punishment of sin? We answer in the words of our text: "The wicked shall be turned into hell." We have proved from Scripture that all are by nature wicked, and now we must speak of their portion, except they repent and believe "They shall be turned into hell." My brethren, is there then a hell deep and fathomless? Where the worm

dyeth not, and the fire is not quenched? A lake of fire and brimstone which they who enter once can never leave? Where the parched tongue will pray in vain for a drop of water? Again we ask is there such a place as this? And the answer is, if the Bible be true, if God be true, there is. Oh then, brethren, what manner of persons ought we to be? How holy, how blameless, with what deep anxiety ought we to ask this momentous question: Who among us shall *dwell* with the devouring fire? Who among us shall *dwell* with everlasting burnings? Notice, the wicked will not go there for a season to be purged; they will not fly through as some affirm; no, they will dwell there, make it their abode, their home; they will go no more out forever. Oh, what a fearful home. Devils and lost souls will welcome them to it, that they may bear rule over them, and trample them down deeper and deeper into the burning lake. But, terrible as are the sufferings of that place, they must be borne to all eternity; this thought alone must increase their pangs a thousand fold. Could they hope that, when thousands of ages had passed away, God would forgive them, or even blot them out of His book of remembrance by destroying them altogether, or if He would appoint a day however distant, and say when that arrives, I will pardon; but no, the decree has gone forth and cannot be revoked: "There is no peace to the wicked saith my God." Men and brethren, what shall we do? Shall we sit down calmly and reason on the subject? Shall we comfort ourselves with the thought that God is merciful? Remember that He is also just, and justice cries against you; remember that He is true, and that He has sworn by Himself "that the wicked shall not go unpunished." Oh, I beseech you do not deceive yourselves by crying: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed."

"Remember Lot's wife," and when God commands you to seek first His kingdom and righteousness, let not your minds be so taken up with worldly business as to forget the one thing needful.

Remember it is the work of the spirit to convince sinners

of their sins. Let us pray, then, that he would graciously vouchsafe to be present with us to-day, and work these works in us. Perhaps there is not one person present who would not acknowledge after what has been said that he is a sinner, but we want you to *feel* it; to live under an abiding sense of it, for, until you feel it, you will not fly to the city of refuge, you will not go to Siloam and wash, you will not come to the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness. Remember, Christ came "to seek and to save that which was lost." If then you feel your lost condition, come to Christ. "He came not to call the righteous but *sinner*s to repentance." If you feel yourself a sinner come to Jesus, He is *your* Saviour. He says: "Come unto me all ye that are *weary* and *heavy laden*, and I will give you rest." Are you weary and heavy laden? Do you feel your sins a burden? Would you gladly be rid of them?

Are you fearful lest they should sink you down to hell? Oh, come to Jesus and He will take all your sins away, and cast them into the depths of the sea, and they shall no more be remembered against you; but you must come at once. Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation; you must not say to Him as Felix did to Paul: "Go thy way for this time, and when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee;" you must beware how you grieve the Holy Spirit, for, if He departs, He may never return. Remember also that the times and the seasons are in God's power. We know not the day of our death. Let us begin at once, *this very day*, to seek the salvation of our souls, and, if Satan comes and seeks to draw off our attention by pleasure or business or some other device, let us answer him in the words of Nehemiah: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?"

HOW LOT'S DESIRE TO GET WEALTH LED HIM INTO TEMPTATION AND LOSS.

Genesis, 19th Chap., 16th Verse.

“And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand; and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters, the Lord being merciful to him; and they brought him forth and set him without the city.”

THE history of Lot was written as all other Scripture for our learning; let us then attentively consider it, and may the Holy Spirit open our hearts to receive the truth, and strengthen our memories to retain it.

When the Lord commanded Abraham: “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will show thee,” we find that Lot went with him, and when soon after a famine compelled Abraham to pass down into Egypt, Lot accompanied him thither also. But why did Lot keep so close to Abraham? Why did he forsake his country, kindred, and father’s house?

Perhaps, it was the love of Abraham, perhaps it was the love of Abraham’s God which first induced him to say with Ruth: “Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

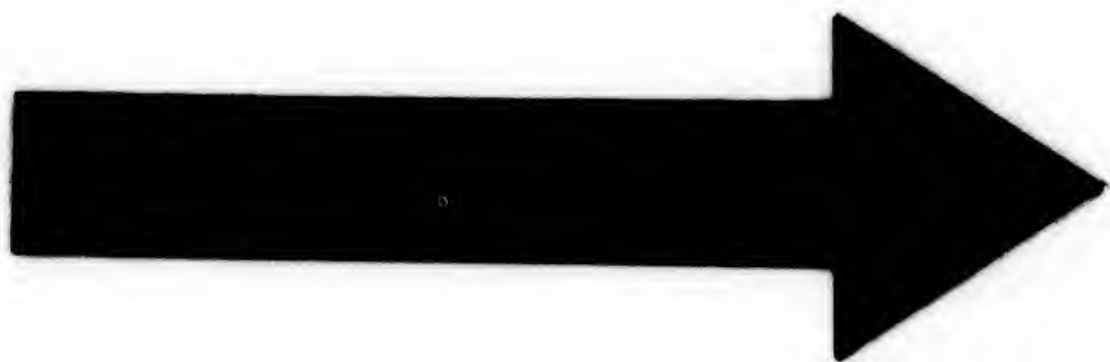
The time came, however, when they must part. It was prosperity which compelled these two good men to separate; their flocks and herds increased at such a rate, that the land was not able to bear them. The consequence was, a strife arose betwixt their herdsmen, and Abraham fearing that he and Lot might in time be involved in the quarrel, proposed that they should at once separate. And Abraham said unto Lot: “Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.”

“And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere.”

Let us attentively consider this portion of Lot's history, convinced that it was the false step he made at this time which lead to all the sin and misery of his after life. That Lot was a righteous man no one can for a moment doubt who believes in the inspiration of the Bible, and has read the second Epistle of St. Peter. That as a righteous man, he ought above all things to seek the welfare of his immortal soul, every person, I presume, will allow. What then are we to think, when we find him walking by sight, and not by faith; looking on the things which are *temporal*, not on the things which are *eternal*; choosing by the sight of his eyes, and asking no counsel of God. What did Lot do? We are told he saw that the plains of Jordan near Sodom were rich, fertile and well watered. It was a good land for cattle and full of pastures; he had flocks and herds, and it just suited his requirements. And this was the land he chose for a residence, simply because it was a rich, well-watered land. "It was near the town of Sodom, he cared not for that. The men of Sodom who would be his neighbours were wicked, it mattered not. They were sinners before God exceedingly; it made no difference to him. The pasture was rich. The land was good. He wanted such a country for his flocks and herds. And before that argument all scruples and doubts, (if indeed he had any), at once went down." We are told that Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom; this was a great mistake. But the next time he is mentioned, we find him actually living in Sodom itself. His tents were left. The country was forsaken. He occupied a house in the very streets of that wicked town.

We are not told the reason of this change. Perhaps Lot expected to find in Sodom a good market for his flocks and herds. Men never want reasons to confirm their wills. One thing is very clear. Lot dwelt in the midst of Sodom without good cause.

As long as Lot remained with Abraham he was safe, but he had no sooner taken up his abode in Sodom than evil befell him; the king of Sodom was defeated in battle, the city was taken and plundered, and the inhabitants carried away captive, and they took Lot and his goods and departed. This



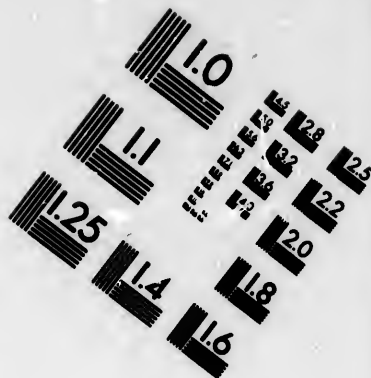
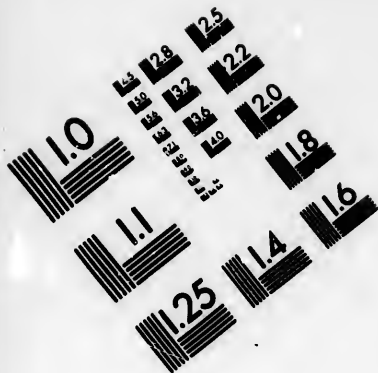
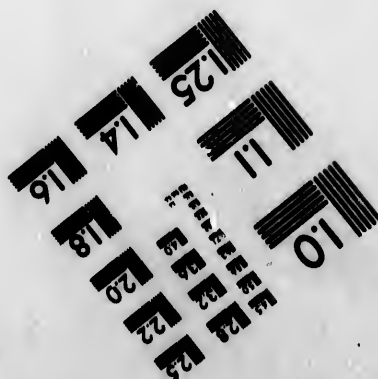
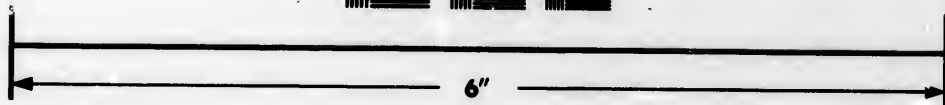
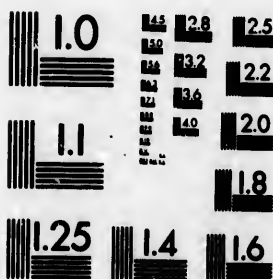


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was the first rebuke which Lot received for dwelling in Sodom. To increase his goods, he turned his steps towards that wicked city, and now he was in a fair way of losing all that he had. Now he was a prisoner in the hand of his enemies; slavery, or death, would soon have been his portion had not God sent Abraham to the rescue.

Was Lot thankful for this mercy? Did he profit by this warning? Did he flee from the wicked city which had been the cause of all his misfortunes? Alas, no! he returned again to Sodom, and there he abode until the slumbering vengeance of God awoke, and fell upon that devoted city. True he escaped, but how? Was it not so as by fire? was he not like a brand plucked out of the burning? Where are now those flocks so white, those herds so fat and well liking, for whose increase he had consented to take up his abode in that wicked country? Where is now his goodly house and all the pleasant things he called his own? Where are now his sons-in-law, those handsome, gay, light-hearted, but ungodly young men, whom his daughters met and loved in that guilty city? and where are now his married daughters? Buried beneath yon black and smoldering heap. But where is she whose name was written on the fibres of his heart, the partner of all his toils, who left her native land, her father's house for him? Oh where is she? Lonely and cold she stands upon the plain of Sodom, a solemn warning to all who being bid to flee from coming wrath look back. Oh wretched Lot, in an evil hour you made an evil choice, and now reap as you have sown.

But to proceed. One evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom, seeing two travellers approach, he invited them to spend the night in his house, and they consented to do so. They proved to be angels, and they plainly declared to Lot their object in visiting the city. "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." Lot believed the warning, and was in great distress, for all that he held most dear was in that city, and now he heard for the first time that it was to be destroyed. He rose in haste to warn those who were dear unto him, "and Lot went out, and

spoke unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said: up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law."

Lot believed; the word of the angel was enough for him, but he did not wish to escape alone, he would fain have led forth his wife, his daughters, and his sons-in-law from the coming destruction; but alas, here was a sore evil, when he came to his sons-in-law to warn them of their danger, they believed him not. "He seemed unto them as one that mocked." But what? Can we believe that righteous Lot was in the habit of sporting with the truth? Can we believe that he had ever deceived his sons-in-law? No. How then are we to account for their unbelief? Our Lord, when speaking to the wicked of his own time, said: "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." We may suppose the sons-in-law of Lot demanded a sign, but no sign was given to them; no black and threatening cloud hung on the devoted city; no distant thunder rolled, no lightning flashed, but the moon was out, decked in her winter beauty, and all the stars shone brightly; how then could they believe that evil was in store? But righteous Lot had said: "Up, get you out of this place, for the Lord will destroy this city." And he had heard it from the Holy Angels, and they had heard it from the God of truth. Was not this enough? Will you not believe, till with your eyes you see the fire and brimstone falling? *Then* you will be convinced. *Then* all will be convinced; but then it will be too late to flee.

It may have appeared strange to the sons-in-law of Lot, that the angel should warn Lot and his family alone, and leave the rest of the inhabitants of Sodom to perish. Perhaps they thought it unlikely that God would destroy the city, when he found the wicked so numerous; whatever were their reasons, they would not believe Lot's warning: "He seemed unto them as one that mocked."

Brethren, we are told that Lot believed the testimony of the angel, he believed that the city would soon be destroyed, and yet "he lingered." When Lot entered Sodom, he had many flocks and herds, many servants, many children, can

we wonder that when the warning came he was unwilling to go forth alone? Can we wonder that he lingered till the last moment, warning and entreating his children and household to flee from the wrath to come?

But the morning arose, the time for mercy was ended, the day of vengeance drew near, still Lot lingered; then the angels laid hold upon his hand, they used holy violence, they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

Here, then, we have at last Lot and his wife and his two daughters outside the wall of Sodom; now they are safe, if they only take heed to the command of the angel: "Escape, for thy life look not behind thee." But oh! who is sufficient for these things? Who can turn his back on houses and lands, or friends and children, and not take one last fond look? The trial was too great for Lot's wife. "She looked back, and she became a pillar of salt." Perhaps she did not altogether believe the report of the angels. The sun was already gilding the horizon, promising a glorious dawn, could it be that Sodom was in flames behind her? She doubted, she halted, she looked back, and her fate was sealed; she became a pillar of salt.

Brethren, consider that monument of vengeance on the plain of Sodom; speak to her, she does not hear; cry, she does not regard you; urge her to flee again from coming wrath, she does not move; she is dead. So will it be with you. If you really turn back now, turn back to sin, we may speak, but you will not hear; we may cry, but you will not regard; we may urge you again to flee, but you will not move. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him?" "No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God."

Satan does not expect men to sin for nothing. As once he offered the Saviour all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, if he would fall down and worship him, so now he says to each of us, commit this sin and I will reward you. Who would sin if there was no pleasure or profit? Who would brave the anger of God? Who would break His holy commandments, unless some advantage appeared to flow from it?

Now, brethren, if you would reach heaven you must make many sacrifices, you must deny yourselves many things; you must crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts; you must be contented to see others outstrip you in the race after worldly honour; you must be content to see others become richer than yourself, and enjoying more of the pleasures of this life. Let it content you that you have in heaven a more enduring substance, a house not made with hands. Yet a little while, and titles of honour shall cease, the world and its pleasure shall pass away, the fine gold shall wax dim; then happy they, and happy they *alone*, who have laid up treasure for themselves in heaven where neither moth devoureth nor rust corrupteth.

We would in conclusion speak a few words to those among you who have made an evil choice, we would bid you remember Lot. Remember his first choice, it was a good one, when he determined to walk with faithful Abraham. Perhaps like Lot your first choice was good, you determined to keep close to some godly man, and to follow his counsel. But circumstance compelled you to separate. Was your second choice a good one? How is it with you now? I do not ask are your flocks and your herds increasing? I do not ask are you adding house to house and field to field? But I do ask, how is it with your soul? Is there peace between you and God? Or do you find yourself engaged in some soul-absorbing business, and are you endeavouring to quiet your conscience, by telling it that your fortune will soon be made, and then you will devote more time to the concerns of the soul. But while you wait, while you linger, *death* will not wait, death will not linger, lo he comes with rapid strides; and if he finds you unprepared, you are lost; lost eternally, Oh haste. "Escape, for thy life look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed."

SEEKING THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

St. Matthew, 6th Chap., 33rd Verse.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God."

THE word "seek" is frequently met with in Holy Scripture. We find it used by our Lord in the parable of the woman with ten pieces of silver: "If she lose one piece, doth she not light a candle, and sweep the house and *seek* diligently till she find it?" Again read: "The son of man is come, to *seek* and to *save* that which was lost." Fancy then you see a poor woman who has lost a tenth part of her treasure; she does not begin to seek it in the dark, that would be to waste time, and lay herself open to grievous disappointment if she happened to grasp something resembling the lost treasure. No, her first care is to light a candle, she makes use of all the helps she can procure, she does not leave a corner of the house unswept, she seeks diligently, spares neither back nor eyes, until she has found it.

Again, fancy you see a shepherd gathering his flock around him, and numbering it. He has finished and one is missing. See him drive the ninety and nine into the fold, and having secured them set off for the wilderness. Now he descends into the dark valley; now he climbs the rugged mountain side; now he beats among the underwood; now he peers into the gloomy cave; the shades of evening descend upon him, he is hungry and faint, but he will not desist from the search, until he has found the lost one. This is to seek; to seek diligently, my brethren. Oh that you would so seek the kingdom of God.

Observe now the degree in which you are to seek it. The words of our text are plain and decisive on this point. The command is *seek first*. Perhaps, there is not one person present here to-day who does not wish to enter into the kingdom of God; but, my brethren, do you regard it as the one thing needful? the goodly point which you are determined to possess cost what it may? Is it the grand object of your

lives, to prepare for heaven; or do you content yourself with wishing? I am confident you would despise the man who, having set his heart on some worldly good, could quietly sit down and wish for it, you would esteem him nothing better than a fool, and yet this is the way many of you act with regard to your eternal concerns. While your time, talents, and energies are devoted to the attainment of riches, or honour, or pleasure, you seem to take it for granted that that which is ten thousand times more precious will come to you of its own accord. While you know and confess that no earthly good can be obtained without some struggle, some sacrifice, you seem to take it for granted that you have only to express a wish to enter the kingdom of God, and the gates will immediately fly open. But the word of God speaks of a seeking to enter in—a seeking it first to the neglect of things of less importance.

From the words of our text we naturally infer that there are other things which we may seek. Yes, we may seek riches, we may seek honour, we may seek pleasure, but it must be in moderation, having continually an eye to God's glory. We commit sin when, forgetful of the kingdom of God, we make any one of them the object of our lives. When therefore the love of riches has increased to such a degree, that we are tempted to covetousness or fraud, we may be sure it has obtained an undue ascendancy over us. If our hearts are so set upon honour that we are determined to pursue it at any cost, we have reason to fear that we are not of those who seek first the kingdom of God. If a fondness for pleasure induces us to sacrifice any known duty, we have need to be on our guard lest it should be said of us that while we have a name to live, we are spiritually dead.

If you determine to "seek first the kingdom of God," as you are commanded in the text, then riches, pleasure, fame, the opinion of the world, must all give way when they would hinder you in running the heavenly race. But some of you may think that heaven will not repay you for such sacrifices. To you heaven appears far distant, you look forward to many happy years on earth. Perhaps it will be easier for you to decide which of the many objects we have set before you is

most worthy of your attention when we have spoken a few words on each.

First, then, to begin with riches; to those among you who consider them the one thing needful, we would now address ourselves. We might begin by reminding you how many competitors you will have to contend with; we might begin by pointing out to you the number of blanks in this lottery and the fewness of the prizes; but we forbear, fearing our labour would be in vain, for we know that hope in man is strong, and that if there was but one prize, each would deem himself the happy man who was sure to draw it. Such being the case, we will not stop to reason with you upon the uncertainty of the pursuits you are engaged in; we will suppose that you have obtained all that your soul coveted after, and could say in the words of Solomon: "I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kind of fruits; I made me pools of water; I got me servants and maidens also; I had great possession of great and small cattle; I gathered me silver and gold." Here we might remind you that riches, even after they are gathered, often take to themselves wings and fly away, but we will suppose that yours is the fortunate exception. We will suppose that your wealth remaineth with you unto the end. And must there then be *an end*? Is there a time appointed when even those who have made gold their confidence must lie down in the dust of the earth; when they must bid *farewell*, a *long farewell* to all their greatness, and claim kindred with the dust, saying to corruption: "Thou art my father; and to the worm thou art my mother and my sister."

Ah, this is *indeed* a drop of bitterness which, did they allow themselves time to reflect upon, would turn their cup of happiness into gall; for how could they be happy, however situated in this world, who knew God was their enemy, and eternal torment their portion: "Oh that they were wise, that they understood these things, that they would consider their latter end." Yes, brethren, it is here, when we contemplate the end of the wealthy sinner, that we are forced to exclaim: "Died he not as a fool dieth." Here we learn to set a proper value

upon riches, when we see the possessor of them tossing to and fro, his body racked with pain, his soul stung with remorse; here we are forced to exclaim, surely wealth is a vain thing, it cannot profit, it cannot prolong the life of man, it cannot calm the guilty conscience, it cannot wash away sin.

Brethren, should Satan take any of you (as once he did the Saviour) up into a high mountain, and show you all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and say, all these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me, do you think you would have strength to refuse the tempting offer? Tempting as the offer may appear, believe me, it would be madness for you to accept it, for allowing that he had the power, and was as good as his word, the question might still be asked: "What shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" By entering into league with Satan you at once make God your enemy, and all that you most highly prize he can in a moment take from you, and leave you poor and miserable, and blind, and naked. You may be saying in the words of a certain rich man: "Soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." But God may say: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Some persons are very anxious to be rich, but they are determined to use no dishonest means; and they think that this is allowable. Now we would ask such persons which occupies their mind most; how to get rich, or how to enter the kingdom of God? We would like them to compare the time they spend in seeking the former with the time they spend in seeking the latter, and having done this, we would entreat them not to deceive themselves. Oh that we could induce them to enter into their closet, and examine their hearts, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but so that they might discover what they really were seeking.

Brethren, always look to the end of life, and think what will give you comfort then. Can riches comfort you? Can you carry them away with you? "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." If we were to continue here forever, there would be some sense in

seeking riches first ; but seeing that man being in honour abideth not ; seeing that our days are few and short ; seeing that when we die our pomp cannot follow us, but will most certainly rise up in judgment against us, and condemn us, it is fit, it is proper, it is wise, to seek something more enduring, something which will not leave us in the hour of our greatest need.

The second class of seekers are those who look upon pleasure as the chief good. Of these the apostle makes mention, "Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." This is their business, this is the sole object of their lives, to pass the time pleasantly ; their cry is, "who will show us any good." We meet with them chiefly among the young ; to them the world appears in its brightest colours ; they hope to live many years, and to have joy in them all. In vain the preacher standing by the lifeless body of one as young and as fair as they lifts up a warning voice, and says : "In the midst of life, we are in death." In vain he entreats them to "seek first the kingdom of God ;" they will acknowledge that it is wise to do so, and tell him that they have determined at some future time to make their peace with God ; but not yet, they are young, strong and healthy, there is no fear of them. When they can no longer taste what they eat or what they drink ; when they can no longer hear the voice of singing men or singing women ; then, when they can no longer find pleasure in the world, they will begin to prepare themselves for heaven ; they will not seek it first, as commanded in the text, but *last of all*. Can we be surprised then if they do *not find it* ? Can we be surprised if many such should "seek to enter in and should not be able." Can we be surprised if God address then in such language as this : "Because I have called, and ye refused ; I have stretched out My hands, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at naught all My counsel, and would none of My reproof ; I also will laugh at your calamity ; I will mock when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirl-wind ; when distress and anguish cometh upon you, then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me."

The third class of seekers are those who are in pursuit of fame; by which we understand a desire that our deeds may be known among men, our names handed down to the latest posterity. Fame has many seekers, but she is found by few. How many who have spent a life in her service, striving to do some deed which would be worthy of her acceptance, have been compelled at last to lie down in an obscure grave. How vain, how unsatisfying, are the pursuits of men. What can fame do for those who possess it? Can it smoothe their dying pillow? Can it free them from disease? Can it enable them to endure the frown of an angry God? Oh what will it avail us "in the hour of death and in the day of judgment," that our names are had in honour among men. The world and the things of the world will soon pass away, and then the wicked will be forgotten; "but the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance."

Oh ye lovers of fame, let it content you to have your names written in the Lamb's book of life; let it content you that your repentance will cause joy in the presence of God and His angels; that the spirits of just men made perfect are ready to welcome you as a brother. What has the world to offer compared with this? If you will now seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, your name shall resound through the spacious domes of heaven ten thousand years after this world and all that it contains shall have ceased to exist. "Look not then on the things that are seen, which are temporal, but on the things which are not seen and are eternal."

Why will you spend your strength for naught? and your labour for that which cannot satisfy? Harken unto God your maker, and He will teach you the more excellent way. This is His counsel: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," and before you set your heart on anything, seriously ponder these words, words which the mouth of wisdom hath uttered. Consider the condition of man placed on this earth for a short time, as it were in a school that his character might be developed, and soon to be removed into a state of happiness or misery, and you see at once the wisdom of the command contained in our text. This was the end for which man was created; if he neglects this, it were better for him he had never been born.

Observe, brethren, what a prize is here set before you. Here is something which will repay all your efforts. It is no riches, which you must soon leave; but a crown of glory which fadeth not away; it is not the pleasures of a day, a month, or a year, but the pleasures, the enjoyments of the saints in heaven, which are thus described in the word of God: "They shall hunger no more; neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them or any heat. For the lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Brethren, you are now about to depart to your several homes, but be ye well assured that this sermon shall one day rise up in judgment against you and condemn you, if you do not begin to seek the kingdom of God, to seek it first, to seek it diligently, to seek it as hid treasure, to seek it with your whole heart; for unless you so seek it, you will never find it.

ST. PAUL'S PERPLEXITY.

Philippians, 1st Chap., 23rd Verse.

"For I am in a straight betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

THESE words express a state of Christian feeling which every true follower of Christ should strive after. The Epistle which contains them was written by the Apostle Paul to the Church at Philippi, during the latter part of his first imprisonment at Rome. There was a struggle going on in the mind of the Apostle when he wrote these words: "I am in a straight betwixt two;" he was thinking of his approaching trial before the Emperor Nero, thus his mind naturally turned to the consideration of *life* and *death*, which was most desirable in his own case; and here he was in a straight or difficulty, for if he thought only of himself, he decided at once in favour of death. "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." But when, on the other hand, he thought of the many Churches he had planted, which were not yet settled and grounded in the truth; when he considered that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them not sparing the flock; then, for their sakes he desired to live, he was content to abide in the flesh, seeing it was more needful for his brethren.

Observe the manner in which the Apostle speaks of death, he calls it a *departure*. Just as a traveller would describe his passing from one country to another, so he speaks of quitting this world and entering into heaven. While we listen we are almost tempted to forget that he is speaking of the king of terrors, by whom the children of this world are all their lives kept in bondage. Strong in faith he looked on heaven as a great reality; not a distant country which it would take him years to reach, but near, very near. He never thought, as some have lately done, that his soul would sleep until the resurrection morn. He saw nothing between him and Christ, between this world and the next, but the dark river of death, and

to him it did not appear dark, for the rays of the sun of righteousness were shining full upon it. He knew that the same God who had opened a pathway for the children of Israel through the waters of the Red Sea had given this promise to every true believer: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee;" therefore, he could say: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; the rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Few Christians of the present day have attained to this blessed state; few can say with the Apostle: "I have a desire to depart." Now, if we inquire into the cause of this, we shall find that it arises from want of faith. We do not lay hold of the promises of God, as we do the promises of men; we do not realize the glorious things which are spoken of the city of God; we do not meditate sufficiently on the many mansions in heaven which Christ has gone to prepare for those who love Him. We are still of the earth, *earthly*; in us the love of Christ has not yet absorbed the love of minor objects, this is the reason we are so unwilling to depart. Our treasure is here, therefore our hearts are here also; but were it otherwise, did the love of Christ so reign in our hearts as to put all other loves under his feet; were the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world; then it were an easy thing to take up the language of the Apostle: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

But let us turn to the Apostle and endeavour to discover how he arrived at this blessed state. He appears to have been a man of strong faith; early instructed in religion, he saw its immense importance. Convinced that there was another world in which men would be happy or miserable forever, and that it was man's best wisdom to secure heaven at whatever cost, he set himself to the work; and although for a time he wrought in the dark, yet God, who knows the heart, saw that he desired to serve Him, and graciously opened his eyes. He led him, He instructed him, He sent him forth to preach the Gospel; and Paul went cheerfully to endure hunger and thirst, weariness and pain for the cross of Christ. He was

scourged, he was imprisoned, his feet were made fast in the stocks, he was stoned, he suffered shipwreck, and last of all he was beheaded. He might have escaped all these sufferings and been held in great esteem by his countrymen had he remained a Pharisee; but like Moses "he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." This was the victory which overcame the world, even his faith; "he looked not on the things which are seen, which are temporal, but on the things which are not seen and are eternal." His was no dim and shadowy hope; he never lost sight of heaven for a moment, and this enabled him to bear up under all his troubles, for he was persuaded that "these light afflictions which are but for a moment would work out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory."

But why did the Apostle desire to depart? "In the world ye shall have tribulation," says our Lord, and these words had been abundantly fulfilled in the Apostle's case, yet this was not the reason why he desired to depart. Again, many of the friends of his youth, many whom he fondly loved had left this world and entered the eternal state, had fled to the bosom of their Saviour and their God, but St. Paul does not tell us that he desired to depart and to be with them. Again, he had been caught up to the third heaven, his eyes had rested on the glories of Paradise, but he did not desire to depart that he might enjoy these things. No, it was that love of Christ which had carried him over sea and land, to preach the Gospel to a world lying in wickedness, although he knew that bonds and afflictions awaited him; it was that love, I say, which compelled him to exclaim in the words of our text: "I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Let us now inquire why so few Christians can adopt the language of St. Paul. We have already attributed this to want of faith, we will now endeavour to prove our assertion. Suppose we could prove to anyone of you that a beautiful house and large landed property in some distant but well-known land had been left you by will, what effect would such news have on you? Would you not hasten at once to

tell it? Would you not go from friend to friend, and from neighbour to neighbour, and inform them all of your good fortune that they might rejoice with you? And if you could procure a book that contained a complete account of the estate that had been left you, how diligently would you read it; how carefully would you note each particular; you would scarce take time to eat or sleep.

Should you happen to meet others who had had the same good fortune, would you not delight to converse with them of that happy land where you expected soon to go? Would you not consult with each other on the best and safest way of travelling to that country? Oh how anxiously would you wait the arrival of the ship which was to convey you to your new home. Would the waves of the broad Atlantic terrify you? Would you allow them to hinder you from taking possession of your inheritance?

Now, let us see how this will apply to our own case. We profess to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and the Bible assures us that if we are Christians, if we truly believe on the only begotten Son of God, we shall straight way on our departure from this world enter the New Jerusalem, the heavenly city, which is surrounded by a wall of precious stones, and the twelve gates are twelve pearls. Every several gate made of one pearl; and the street of the city is of pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

In this city there is a pure river of water clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; there also is the tree of life which beareth twelve manner of fruits, and yieldeth her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

It is, indeed, a good and pleasant land, where God shall wipe away all tears from the eyes of His believing people, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away. But it is not necessary that I should repeat to you all the glorious things which are spoken of the city of God; you know them, you have read them, you profess to believe them; how is it then that when you meet together you so seldom speak of them? How is it that you do not think of them by day, and dream of them by night?

How is it that the Bible, which contains so full an account of these things, is so sparingly read, so little valued? How is it that so few can say: "I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon."

We hesitate not to affirm that unbelief is the cause of all this inconsistency. We do not mean to say that you will in words deny that there is such a place as heaven; oh no! we have no fear of that, but this we do say, that to all practicable purposes, as far as deeds are concerned, the majority of you are unbelievers. But you will say, did I know I should surely enter heaven when I die. I could then say with the Apostle: "I have a desire to depart." Why then do you not strive after that assurance? It may be attained if you will but set yourself to the work heartily and honestly. You must forsake every known sin; you must daily withdraw yourself from the world, and meditate on that rest which remaineth for the people of God; you must walk by faith and not by sight, keep heaven with all its unfading, unchangeable glories in view, and your affections will soon be weaned from this vain and transitory world. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Now learn a lesson from the miser; he has set his heart on gold, and night after night he will heap his table with shining pieces; he will count them o'er and o'er, and not grow weary; he will feast his eyes on them and never say it is enough. The worldly man, also, see what delight he takes in his estate; he walks through the length and breadth of it; the sound of his own waterfall is as music to his ears; the trees are pleasant to his sight. The woman of pleasure also, see how she rejoices at the prospect of the coming ball. But the Christian, what shall I say of him? He appears to be the only inconsistent man in the world, the only person who is not in earnest, the only one whom you cannot understand; professing to believe that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God," he seldom speaks of it, and when he does it is with cold indifference; he has no desire to enter it, no love to Him Who has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Ah, brethren, let us beware, let us examine ourselves; can we indeed be heirs of the kingdom of heaven who have no desire to enter; who when we meet

together spend our time in light and foolish talk; who would rather listen to a vain and silly song, than discourse on heavenly subjects.

We would in conclusion address a few words to those among you who think they can say with the Apostle: "I have a desire to depart." Why do you desire to depart? Is it because things do not prosper with you in the world as you could wish? Because God is laying a heavy hand upon you? Because pain and sickness are your portion? Is it because your children, your brothers and sisters, your friend who is as your own soul have been taken away from you, and you long to see their faces once more? Is it because you wish to drink of that pure stream which proceedeth out of the throne of God? It was, as we said before, for none of those reasons that the Apostle desired to depart life: he longed to gaze on the countenance of his Saviour and his God; to bask in His smile, to view His perfection, to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, and to cast his crown at his Redeemer's feet. We do not mean to say that the pains and sufferings which the Apostle endured, the prospect of meeting his friends again, and enjoying with them the glories of heaven, had no effect, but this we do say, that they were not the only or the principal things which induced him to exclaim: "I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

Let no man, therefore, think because he is weary of life, that he has a good title to heaven; let not such an one presume to take up the words of the Apostle. Let no man think when God has snatched away some lovely creature, the idol of his soul, that he can appropriately use the words of our text. Let no man think, because he delights to hear the preacher speak of the glories of heaven that he has a good title to them. But if there are any here "who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," whom having not seen they love, in whom, though now they see Him not, yet believing they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; to them we would say, brethren, be of good cheer, your title is good, it is the same as the Apostle's. "Yet a little while, and he that cometh shall come, and will not tarry." Then you shall behold Him whom your soul loveth, you shall enter into His presence, and go no more out forever.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

St. Matthew, 4th Chap., beginning at 1st Verse.

"Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred; and when the tempter came to him he said, if thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, it is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness. Then, that is immediately after what took place in the preceding chapter. Immediately after the *spirit* had descended upon Him, and the Father had proclaimed from heaven, "*this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,*" He was led up of the spirit into the wilderness, the spirit of God which was in Him moved Him to retire into the wilderness. We learn from this that it was the will of God that His Son should meet in battle and overcome the great enemy of our race. He had promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and He was about to make good His promise. When Satan came to tempt our *first* father Adam, he found him in a well-tilled and fruitful garden, possessed of everything that could make life pass *pleasantly* and agreeably. Whatever was pleasant to the sight or agreeable to the taste was there. Did he feel the knawings of hunger, he might pluck the fruit of every tree of the garden save *one*, and that *one* was *withheld* not because it was *better* than the rest, but *simply* to try his obedience. Adam until he sinned possessed everything that heart could wish, he lived in the light of God's countenance, he held daily intercourse with his Master.

But turn with me and let us contemplate the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Beloved indeed, was he of the Father for His own sake, yet now standing in the room of sinners, with *our sins*, like a cloud, shutting Him out for a time from the light of God's countenance. The garden in which the

first Adam dwelt is changed by the mighty power of sin into a waste, a howling wilderness. Behold, then, the second Adam in the wilderness, without a house to shelter Him from the rays of the burning sun, without a bed on which to stretch His weary limbs, left forty days and forty nights without one particle of food; had the first Adam been thus tempted we could not wonder at his fall.

My brethren, there are many *good* men, many *good* Christians into whose mind the devil is continually casting evil thoughts, continually tempting them to commit some wickedness or other. These men are not of a sorrowful spirit, for they often doubt if they can be Christians in very deed. Let such persons remember for their comfort that the great Captain of their salvation was in all points tempted as they are, yet without sin. Let such persons remember for their comfort, that the evil thoughts which spring up in the mind, if resisted and cast out at once, will not be imputed to them as sin. Satan may entice us to evil, but he cannot compell us. God is stronger than he is; and God has said to him as well as to the mighty deep, "thus far shalt thou go and no farther." And when the tempter came to Him, he said: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." We must not suppose that Satan was ignorant of the true nature of our Lord. Doubtless he or some of his company were present on the banks of Jordan when Jesus was baptized, and heard the voice of the Father saying: "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Bear in mind that Jesus had been forty days without food, and that He was now an hungered, for it was on the knowledge of this fact that Satan grounded his temptation, "If thou be the Son of God." We can fancy the devil addressing the Saviour thus: I am aware that you have been proclaimed to be the Son of God, but you will pardon me if I express my doubts on the subject, for I cannot believe that God would thus cast off and forsake His well-beloved Son. Surely that voice from heaven was *not* the Father's Voice, there must be some mistake. I cannot believe that God would leave His Son to wander in the wilderness forty days and forty nights without food. But if you are *indeed* the Son of God, and thus deserted, what does it

prove? It proves one of two things, either God does not regard your sufferings, or He has no power to help you. Now let me give you my advice, trust no longer in God; but if you have any power of your own put it forth: "Command that these stones be made bread." And here the question may be asked, would our Saviour have sinned had He harkened to Satan and wrought a miracle. The devil evidently thought so, or he would not have tempted Him.

The Almighty had acknowledged Jesus as his Son, and it followed as a matter of course, that He would provide for all His wants. Had the Son then put forth his miraculous power, it would clearly have implied a distrust of the Father's goodness.

Brethren, we have been considering the first temptation to which our Lord was exposed. This is one of those fiery darts of the wicked one, by means of which he has slain his *thousand*, and *tens of thousands*, by means of which he has sorely wounded many true Christians. How often has he drawn near to the Christian, poor in this world's goods, and whispered in his ear, "If thou be the Son of God." "If you are indeed a Christian, how is it you are so poor? how is it that your children have scarce food to eat? Surely, he will insinuate there must be some mistake, either you are *not a Christian*, or God is not faithful to His promise." Thus Satan is continually taking advantage of the afflictions which God permits to come on His people. In such seasons as these it is well for us to remember that the *only begotten* and well-beloved of the Father was left in the wilderness forty days and forty nights without food, yet he doubted not his Father's love. Let us then pray for a portion of His spirit that we also may learn to trust our Heavenly Father, to trust Him though we cannot trace Him, and to say with Holy Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." "Although the fig tree shall not blossom; neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

My brethren, ye who are endeavouring to walk with God

tell me what did He promise you when He called you out of the world, and said "follow me;" did He promise you riches, or honor, or pleasure, in this life? You know that He did not; on the contrary, He said to all: "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." And again: "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." If trials and afflictions come then you must not be surprised, you must not think it *strange*, as though some strange thing had happened unto you, but rejoice, remembering that it is written: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

And, my brethren, is there not a *cause*? can we not (short-sighted beings as we confessedly are) discover the reason why God sends *trials* and *afflictions* upon His people? He knows how prone we are, if riches increase, to set our *hearts* upon them, and this is the reason that we so often find the heirs of the kingdom of heaven clothed in rags. He knows how prone we are, when everything is prospering with us in this world, to forget that better country, "where there remaineth a rest for the people of God;" therefore, He sends disappointments, trials, affections, sickness, death, to loosen the ties, to cut asunder the chain, which binds us to this earth, that we may at length grow weary of the world, and long to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Happy is the man who bears the rod, and him who hath appointed it. Happy is the man who takes his affliction patiently, believing that it comes from the hand of *one* who does not willingly *afflict* or *grieve* the children of men.

We come now to consider our Lord's answer; He said: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." It is written where? in the word of God. Here I would have you note the weapon by means of which Satan was vanquished. There were many ways open to the Saviour of stopping the mouth of the adversary, but on this occasion He used the sword of the Spirit, "which is the word of God." Doubtless He did so for our encouragement, that we might know where to go for a weapon when assaulted by the devil. The Bible,

even in the hands of the weakest believer is *quick* and *powerfull*, sharper than any two-edged sword; one passage rightly applied will at any time put the devil to flight. How necessary then that we should mark, learn, and inwardly digest it. We must not allow the sword to rust, we must keep it bright, and clean, and sharp, for we know not at what moment the adversary will attack us.

"Man shall not live by bread alone;" these words are found in the 8th Chap. of Deut., at the 3rd verse. They were first spoken by Moses in reference to the manna which the children of Israel did eat in the wilderness forty years. Our Lord's argument seems to run thus: you seem to think it necessary that I should turn these stones into bread, now I believe that God is able to create a new kind of food, nay, more, He is able to sustain my body without food should He see fit. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word or thing that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Man is a compound being; he has a body which we see, and a soul which we cannot see, which nevertheless we believe exists, and is the *thinking, reasoning*, principle in man. The body is nourished by food and grows up from *infancy* to *youth*, from *youth* to *manhood*. Withdraw food at any of the different stages of life, and the body pines away. On the other hand, the soul after it has been born again of the spirit is nourished by the word of God and prayer.

The moment the Christian lays aside his Bible and ceases to attend the house of God, where it is read in public, his soul begins to pine away, to grow cold, and unless his eyes are speedily opened to his danger, angels shall weep for him in secret places, for he is dead, dead in the sight of God, dead in trespasses and sin. *A body* without a soul, a painted sepulchre, *beautiful indeed without*, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.

A prayer is the golden key that openeth the morning and shutteth in the night. Prayer moves the arm that moves the world. All things are possible unto the faithful praying man. Jacob prayed, he wrestled with God, saying: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." And Esau, who was coming against him with 400 armed men to destroy him, met him

as a brother, his anger was turned away by prayer. Elijah prayed and no rain fell for three years and six months. He prayed again and the heaven gave rain. Daniel prayed when cast into the den of lions, and the mouths of those savage beasts were closed and he comes forth unhurt. Shedrach, Meshach, Abednego prayed when cast into the burning fiery furnace and the fire had no power to hurt them, not an hair of their heads was singed. The time would fail me to tell of the victories gained by prayer in the past; and believe me it has not lost its power. Try it, wrestle with God in prayer for some worthy object, and you will find the truth of that saying: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them."

In conclusion, let me remind you that we have just entered on the season of *Lent*; a season set apart by the Church in memory of the Saviour's great fast of forty days in the wilderness just before he entered on His public ministrations, and as all that He suffered on that occasion He suffered for our sakes, so gratitude would seem to dictate that we should ever have it in grateful remembrance. In regard to fasting, which some consider one of the great duties of this season, there seems to be a great diversity of opinion in the religious world, some highly extolling it, and others regarding it as little better than will worship. "Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own mind;" for my part, I regard it as a means to an end. The great object of all religion, all true religion, is to make men holy; to revive in them the divine image which sin has effaced; to make them more Godlike, and whatever tends to this end must be good. The best fast, that which is most acceptable in the sight of God, is a fast from evil thoughts, from idle words, from slanderous stories, from envy, hatred, malice, and all uncleanness, and if you feel yourself strong, strong in the Lord of Hosts to battle with these enemies of your soul, God forbid that we should lay on you any unnecessary burden. But if you are a man given to appetite, if you find it hard to keep the body under, if the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life are strong within you, then it may be good, it may be necessary to fast. The great Apostle of the Gen-

tiles found it so in his own case; he says: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away."

We live in an age when the great body of Christian people deny themselves nothing. Self-sacrifice is dead. The great first lesson which the Saviour taught when He descended from the throne of light to the manger in Bethlehem was self-sacrifice, and every step of His painful life was marked with blood. "He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him." And we must imitate His example. We must follow in His steps. This is the narrow way that leads up to the gate of heaven. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." The cross here referred to is not made of gold or precious stones. It is the reproach of Christ; do you know anything of it? Have you ever borne it in the midst of an evil world?

The Church and the world have got sadly mixed up of late. The stout wall that once existed between the broad and narrow way is now broken down, and men pass freely from this world to the Church, and from the Church to the world. The Saviour told His disciples: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," and they believed Him not, so now thousands of His professed followers try it every day and as they believe with good success. Satan has become very liberal of late, he allows his followers to attend the service of the Church. He cares not for your baptism, your confirmation, your reception of the Lord's Supper, for he knows that, notwithstanding all these, you may be his true and loving disciple. If your hearts are not given to Christ; if your names are not written in the Lamb's book of life, in the last great day, the day of judgment, you shall stand on the left hand of the Judge, among the goats, and then Satan will claim you for his own.

MISSIONARY ADDRESS.

Mr. Chairman:—

I am well aware that of the majority of men in this country it may be said with truth that when they are young they are poor; their fortunes have to be made; they cannot sit down at once to enjoy life; toil is before them: "A rising early, and a late taking rest." As they increase in years, the fortunate ones among them increase in wealth also. Some of them at the age of forty and others at the age of fifty are prepared to sit down and enjoy life; they build their goodly houses; they plant their pleasant gardens; they call the lands after their own names; they think that their houses shall endure forever. But while the flowers are yet in their bloom, a frost, a chilling frost, seizes the master of the house, he is carried forth and he returns no more. You will say, perhaps he has the consolation of knowing that he has provided an inheritance for his children. But will they be the happier? Will they be the better for it? Cast your eyes over the length and breadth of this glorious land of ours, note well its men of wealth, and those who occupy prominent positions, whether at the bar, on the bench or in the Legislative Councils of the country. Trace their origin; tell me, are they the sons of rich men who became rich by withholding from the Church her just portion? Are they not rather the sons of poor but honest men who gave their children a good education and a blessing, and thus equipped sent them forth to the battle of life. Many a rich man's son would have been a great man had he been thrown altogether on his own resources (he had all the necessary talent), but his fond and foolish father gave him a golden staff to lean on, and he leaned on it till he became a cripple. Poverty is, indeed, a hard master; few fond mothers would willingly place their children at his school. Nevertheless some of the brightest lights that ever illumined the darkness of this lower world have been brought up at his feet. "Necessity is the mother of invention;" it is also the mother of industry, industry without which, no matter how great

a man's talents may be, he can never attain to the high places of the earth. It is industry then that takes the children of the poor by the hand, and leads them up the steep ascent of ambition, till she crown them upon its summit. But the children of those very men made rich by their fathers turn their backs on industry, and resting on the taboggan of pleasure, they glide swiftly down from the steep ascent their fathers had attained till they find a resting place in the vale of obscurity. If I then address any fathers, ambitious that their sons may attain to honour, may take their place among the magnets of the land—and surely this is a laudable ambition—I would say, give your children a sound and, above all, a religious education (and the last I am sorry to say is not to be obtained in the common school of this country), give them such an education as I have alluded to, and then tell them plainly that their own right hand must do the rest.

When the eagle is young, the parent bird carries it up into the heavens, then casts it off into the air that it may learn to fly; but weak of wing and unpractised, instead of mounting upward to the sun, in spite of all its efforts it falls gradually to the earth, where it would most certainly be dashed in pieces but that the parent bird, watching its opportunity, darts swiftly underneath it, and bears it again into the heavens, again to cast it off, and this process is continued from day to day till the young eagle strong of pinion, springs from its home among the rocks and soars into the heavens. Would it ever have been able to accomplish this feat if the parent bird had always carried it about upon its back and never thrown it upon its own resources? So parents who are ambitious for their children, who would like to see them soar above their fellows, and like the eagle build their nest on high, must early compel them to exercise those talents which a gracious God has given them.

But, Mr. Chairman, to speak more closely to the object of the meeting, I would observe that when we meet a Christian more penurious than his fellows—and we do meet some very penurious Christians in our wanderings—what do we call him? We call him “an old Jew,” and we think that we have well described his character. Now I have been lately drawn to

consider this expression, and I have come to the conclusion that in thus speaking great injustice has been done to the Jew, for whatever may have been his faults and shortcomings, and I do not stand here this evening as his advocate, we must all I think confess that in the matter of giving, take them as a nation and a people, the world has never seen their equal.

Learned men who have looked into the subject, and computed the value of the many sacrifices and offerings made by that people, have come to the conclusion that the Jewish nation contributed yearly about one-fifth of its income to the service of the Temple and the poor. Where is the Christian nation, where is the Christian Parish—may I not go further and ask, where is the Christian individual, who has attained to this degree of liberality?

He was a Jew, even Jacob, who, when a wanderer from his father's house, vowed and said: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I shall go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I shall come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shall give me, I will surely give the tenth unto Thee."

They were Jews—Jews in deep poverty, having just escaped from slavery—who reared the stately tabernacle in the wilderness; and so freely did they pour in their offering that Moses was obliged to restrain from giving.

They were Jews who built that costly and magnificent Temple in Jerusalem, the pride of the nation, the wonder of the world.

They were Jewish women who, at the command of Aaron, the High Priest, broke off their golden ornaments and brought them unto him.

Now I have no doubt that there are many Christian women scattered through the length and breadth of the land who would be willing at the call of their minister to consecrate their personal ornaments to the service of their God and Saviour, but it saddens us to think how few their number would be in any particular parish. "If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

The question has been asked: "Can a maid forget her ornaments or a bride her attire?" The women of Poland, the women of the Southern States of America, compel us to answer this question in the affirmative. They tell us in language not to be misunderstood, they tell us more by deeds than words, that when a cause has once taken possession of a woman's heart, there is nothing so dear, nothing so precious, that she will not offer it up and consume it on the altar of that cause. Fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, all will be freely given. And I doubt not that if the war trumpet should sound in our land, if the bloodhounds of war were let loose in our border, that the women of Canada, the daughters of Canada, would not be found wanting in the day of trial. Their hands are folded now; their offerings are withheld; their gold is consumed in the purchase of jewels and costly array, But why? Because they think that there is peace within our border. What meaneth then the presence of the Christian warriors among us? They come a deputation from the chief captain of the Diocese to tell us that there is a war raging in this land more deadly and fatal even than that which but yesterday raged on the other side of the border. They come to tell us in the language of the poet that "we are fallen on dark and evil days. Aye, days that wake all to their task! Youth may not loiter now in the green walks of spring; and womanhood is summoned unto conflicts heretofore the lot of warrior spirits. Strength is born in the deep silence of long suffering hearts; not amidst joy."

They come to remind you that "you are not your own;" that you are bought with a price, and that therefore you must glorify God with your bodies and spirit which are His. They come to remind you that in early youth you were brought to the altar of your God, that his white-robed minister received you there, and signed you with the sign of the cross in token that you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified and manfully fight under His banner against sin, the world and the devil, and continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives' end.

You have doubtless heard that of the 70 thousand churchmen enlisted under the banner of the cross in this Diocese, more

than 20 thousand have been found in the day of battle undisciplined, unarmed, unofficered, surrounded by enemies, dispirited, demoralized, and likely to fall an easy prey to the foe. The question for us to consider this evening is, can we afford to lose them? What would be the consequence, in the final struggle with the enemy, if those 20 thousand soldiers, stung by our neglect, should pass over in a body to the ranks of the enemy. If it be righteousness which exalteth a nation, can we calmly contemplate the consequences of 20 thousand of our number growing up in irreligion? I feel persuaded that if our neighbours beyond the river had given in years gone by to the cause of the Gospel of peace one hundredth part of the money they are now giving to the war tax, peace would still have been within their borders. But they put their trust in secular education. They put their trust in civilization. They put their trust in the light of the 19th century, and where has that light led them? Where will it lead us if we follow in its steps as we appear to be doing? Like them we leave religion to take care of itself, to the voluntary principle, because as a nation we do not care whether it lives or dies. But education, secular education which is of service to us for a few years only, we will not leave it to take care of itself. We will not leave it to the voluntary principle. Every man must be taxed to support it whether he approves of the things taught or not, whether he send his children or not.

But religion, a plant of heaven's origin which wise statesmen would like to see springing up in every heart, because they know that it teaches men to be content in that station of life in which God has placed them; because they know that a religious people is ever a law-abiding people; they need no gaols, no police; they are the salt of the body politic, without which it would be a mass of corruption. You all know what happened in France when the great majority of the nation became infidel, when religion was dethroned and death proclaimed by the authority of the nation an eternal sleep. The vilest men were exalted, and the blood of the noble and the good flowed like water. So will it ever be when God is dethroned in a nation.

Let us then, my brethren, manifest our loyalty to our country, as well as to our God, by taking an interest in the Missionary work of the Church, and if need be by making a sacrifice in order that we may do our part in furthering the cause of righteousness, which only can truly exalt this nation.

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

ON comparing the account of this transaction given us by St. Luke with St. Matthew's account, we find a slight difference. From St. Matthew we would infer that both the thieves had joined with the priests in reviling the Saviour. St. Luke speaks as if only one had acted in this manner. Commentators find no difficulty in reconciling these different accounts. They suppose that at first both of them reviled the Saviour, and that it is of this fact that St. Matthew speaks; afterwards one of them relented and became penitent, perhaps from witnessing the patient suffering of Christ. It is of this particular that St. Luke speaks.

The first lesson that we learn from this portion of Scripture is the power and willingness of Christ to save sinners.

We see here a wicked man, a thief, a malefactor, snatched like a brand from the burning. He had been nailed to the cross, he was a dying man, he is fast hastening to the grave, and yet we find him reviling that blessed Being who alone can save him. But suddenly his eyes are opened, he is convinced of sin, he ceases to mock, and begins to pray. Surely if ever there was a soul that seemed lost past recovery, it was the soul of this poor dying thief; but “Jesus is able to save to the uttermost all those that come unto God by him.” Some might think that this man was too wicked to be saved, others that it was too late to apply for mercy—but was it so? No; Jesus, although suffering at that moment the agonies of the cross, graciously heard the prayer of the dying thief. He

pardoned his sins, and assured him that that very day he should be with Him in paradise.

Brethren, are there any here who resemble the dying thief—who have long gone on in a course of wickedness, neglecting their Saviour? We would not have them despair of mercy. Let them come now even as the penitent thief came at the eleventh hour. Jesus will cast out none that come unto Him. They also shall obtain mercy, their sins shall be blotted out, and a mansion shall be prepared for them in the kingdom of heaven.

The second lesson which we learn from this passage of Scripture is, that all do not repent of their sins and believe on Christ when they come to die. Were there not two thieves? Yes, but only one was caught up into paradise. What became of the other? He continued to revile and mock the Saviour to the last. Need I tell you the consequence? No, surely you know the end of all such.

Here, then, is a warning, an awful warning, to all those who are putting off their repentance to a dying hour. Can you repent of your sins when you please? Can you believe on Christ when you please? Can you change your heart when you please? If you can, then you may put off these works to some more convenient season; but if, as the Scripture informs us, repentance and faith are the gifts of God, to be sought and obtained by earnest prayer, then it is evident that you must seek the Lord while He may be found, you must call upon Him while He is near. Oh, it is folly, it is madness, to put off the work of our salvation to a dying hour! How can we call our sins to our remembrance, how can we lift up our hearts in prayer, when the body is racked with pain? In sickness we are unable to attend to the ordinary business of life. How then shall we dare to set apart that season to work out our salvation in? "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation"—now, while health and strength are spared to us, while our intellect is good. Now is the time to treasure up in our memories the precious promises which are written in the Scriptures; now is the time to acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace; now is the time to lift up our hearts in prayer, beseeching

God to "create in us a clean heart and renew a right spirit within us." If we neglect the present opportunity, if we put off repentance to some future season, what will become of us? God only knows. Death will come at last, and if he find us hardened and impenitent, like the lost thief, we shall certainly perish.

Let us now proceed to consider the evidence of the penitent thief's conversion.

First, he had conviction of sin; second, he had faith in Christ; and third, he had love for souls.

He had conviction of sin; he acknowledged the justness of God in his punishment; he felt his sins were many and great; he felt that he was a hell-deserving sinner; he did not go about to establish his own righteousness, he did not claim heaven as a reward, but, like the publican, he prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Secondly, the dying thief had faith in Christ. Perhaps this man had never seen Jesus till they met at the place of execution; perhaps he had never heard of the mighty signs and wonders which Jesus had wrought—how He had healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and raised the dead by His word. We know that many who had seen these miracles nevertheless believed not on Him. The scribes and Pharisees had seen some of these miracles, and yet they cried, "Crucify him, crucify him!" And even the apostles who had seen them all, forsook Him and fled. But we may suppose the penitent thief had seen none of these things—only a man clothed in mean apparel condemned by the wise of his own nation to die the death of a common malefactor. He saw him nailed to the cross, and yet, oh, wonderful! he was enabled to recognize the Lord of glory in his weak, suffering, and dying companion; he was enabled to trust his precious, immortal soul to the care of One who to all appearance was not able to save himself—to One forsaken by His apostles and friends.

We said, in the third place, the penitent thief had love for souls. In proof of this, hear him reprove his wicked companion, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation." A short time before he thought little of his own soul, much less for the souls of others, but now his eyes

have been opened. On the one hand, he sees heaven with all its pleasures; on the other, he sees hell—not surrounded with clouds and darkness as heretofore, not dim and far distant—he sees it clearly, he sees it near. His whole soul is moved within him when he sees men turning their backs on heaven and walking on the broad road which leads to destruction. Like David he makes his moan to God: “Rivers of water run down my eyes because men keep not thy law.”

Brethren, let me ask, have you ever felt any concern for the souls of others? If not, it is a bad sign. If not, you have never been converted, you are still in darkness, still in your sins; and this is the reason you give so little to missionary societies. How can we expect you to care for the souls of others—some of you are quite unconcerned as to what may become of your own. Once the penitent thief felt like you, but Jesus opened his eyes. Oh, go to Him and ask Him to open yours also.

Brethren, we have seen that, though the penitent thief lived but a short time after his conversion, he lived long enough to prove the soundness of it; and here I cannot but condemn the way in which the majority of men speak of their friends departed. However careless their lives may have been, when they come to die, they say they are sorry, and they pray a little and read the Scriptures. They may never have been convinced of their sins; they never have fled to the Cross of Christ for safety. There was a little talk about religion. Their friends are satisfied, and think they have gone to heaven, but let me ask, Will your thinking your friend has gone to heaven bring him there? No, assuredly. His state is fixed, and your hoping he is in heaven, or my fearing he is not, will not alter his condition. But permit me to point out to you the danger of your hope. What a man hopes he soon believes. Now, if you can persuade yourself that your friend, who led an ungodly life, found an entrance into heaven so easy, I am afraid that you will go and do likewise. I am afraid that you also will leave your repentance to a dying hour, and then hope to go to heaven because you are sorry for your sins, have read a few chapters in the Bible and repeated a few prayers.

Brethren, I hope this may not be the case with any of you. I hope that when you depart this life, your friends will have no anxious doubts concerning the state of your soul. I hope, when your minister is called upon to commit your body to the ground, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," that he and all who are present will feel the appropriateness of the words, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

"To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Adam, for his sin and disobedience in eating the forbidden fruit, was cast out of paradise. He went forth reluctantly, and lest he should attempt to return, a flaming sword was placed to guard the way of the tree of life. Now, what would you think of Adam if, when the flaming sword was withdrawn, he neglected to enter paradise again? Would you not think he had lost his relish for its delicious fruit, or discovered a paradise which he liked better? We do not know whether the flaming sword was ever removed, or if the descendants of Adam were permitted to tread its hallowed ground, where the Lord God once vouchsafed to meet and converse with their forefather. But this we do know, that heaven (of which paradise was but a type) is now open, and that the flaming sword which, as soon as Adam sinned, was placed at its gates (to exclude his rebellious race), is now removed, and that the "kingdom of heaven is open to all believers." To-day, says the Saviour to the dying thief, "to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." And my Christian friends, we would now lead you to dwell on the nearness and certainty of your happiness. Many believers, who are contending manfully day after day with the world, the flesh, and the devil, would be quite disheartened did they think for one moment that this warfare would last thirty or forty years. Content to abide the will of their heavenly Father, they hope better things. Living each day as if it were the last, they are not likely to spend it either idly or foolishly. In hope, they wait for the time when their Lord shall say to them, "To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise." Oh, that we could realize what is contained in those words! "To-day thou shalt be free from pain, sickness and sorrow; to-day thou shalt see Christ face to face; thou shalt converse with Him as a man doth with his

friend; to-day thou shalt behold all thy kindred and friends who have departed hence in the Lord—father and mother; sisters and brothers. Oh, happy land, where we meet to part no more! And when shall this be—to-day? so soon? What then shall make the Christian sorrowful? Shall sickness, pain, poverty, imprisonment, death? These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory.

Observe, brethren, there is no mention made here of the soul sleeping until the day of judgment. The soul of the penitent thief is described as passing at once into a place of happiness, and this agrees with what is said by St. Paul, "To be absent from the body is to be present with the soul." In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the same truth is inculcated. No sooner is Lazarus dead than his soul is guided by angels into Abraham's bosom, a place of happiness; while the death of the rich man is no sooner recorded, than it is added, "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." As the tree falls, so it lies; as death finds us, so shall we appear at the bar of judgment.

Beloved brethren, it is a pleasing thought if we have truly repented of our sins past; if we have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ our Saviour, months, weeks, days, and hours are bearing us rapidly on to that time when the Lord shall say to each one of us, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." But let us not forget that this will not be the happy lot of all. To the believer in Christ the voyage to heaven is short, but is it shorter than the descent of the wicked to hell? Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, but fiends of hell conveyed the soul of the rich man as speedily to his last resting-place. Oh, that the adulterer, the swearer, the thief, the liar, the Sabbath-breaker would consider these things! Brethren, are any of you committing these sins? When do you intend to forsake them? What assurance have you that you will live to see another day? This night thy soul may be required of thee, and the whole of your after-history may be summed up in these touching, these heartrending words, "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Oh, brethren, it is near, even at the door. "Ex-

cept ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you will pass from this scene of comparative ease to the blackness of darkness forever. Behold I set before you life and death this day. Oh, choose life that ye may live ! Behold, I set before you heaven and hell. Oh, choose heaven that ye may be happy forever ! Time moves on, and as it moves brings you nearer to one or the other. Can you be indifferent as to which ? Arouse you ; the day is far spent, the night is at hand—the night of death, in which no man can work. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

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