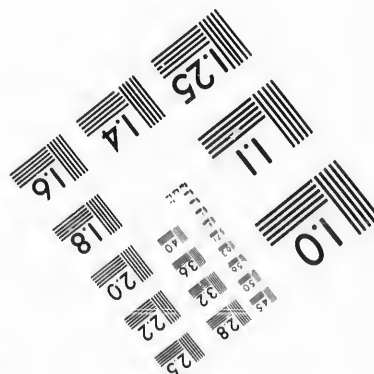
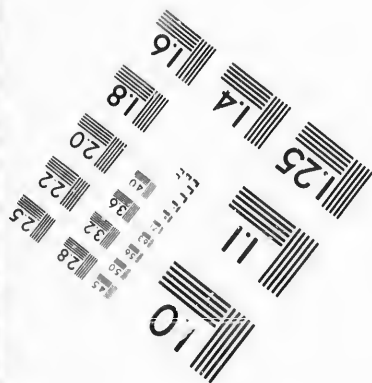
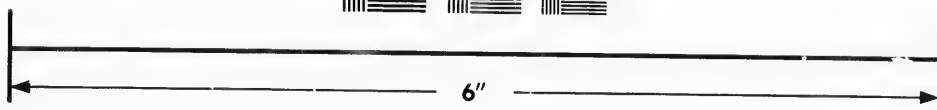
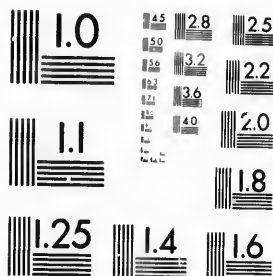


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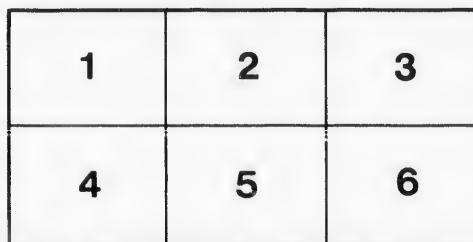
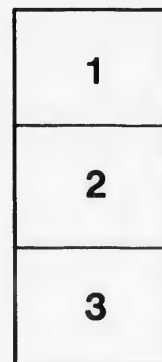
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THE
MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM:

A SERMON,

Preached in St. Luke's Church, Caprairie,

BY
THE REV. H. B. WRAY, B.A.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

MONTREAL:
PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
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TO THE READER.

READER,—This Sermon has been printed for private circulation among a widely-scattered flock, many of whom are unable to attend public worship on the Lord's day. Its object is to present a scriptural basis and common ground of union to a congregation composed of four different religious denominations: it is intended for the common service of all who call upon the name of Jesus, wheresoever dispersed, and howsoever denominated.

It is not intended to present the distinctive points of disagreement between different Christian communions, but rather the common ground of agreement between all communions which bear the common title of Bible Christians. The present time calls upon all Christians with an unmistakeable voice to think less of the differences that divide them, and to rally with increased energy and concord around the common centre that unites them—God's Scripture, the bond of the Spirit.

The subject treated of is designed as an humble attempt to meet the Infidelity and Rationalistic scepticism of our day, and of all days, with the pure power of Bible religion, the infallible dicta of eternal truth. The *ministry of the word* is the great instrument in the hand of the Spirit for the conversion, edification, and sanctification of sinners; for the quickening of those who are dead in trespasses and sins. It is not the word of man, but the word of God that is *quick and power-*

ful. We must not teach mere human theories, but divine revelations. We are not at liberty to use *carnal weapons* of our own devising ; we must trust God with his own truth, and take God's way of doing his own work. In the word of revelation, as in the works of creation, there are mysteries which our finite minds cannot comprehend ; yet, while in the latter case men admit that they believe very much that they cannot understand ; in the former, like Cain, the first Rationalist, they boldly reject the oracles of God, because they cannot comprehend their elevated truths. Because they are not as wise as God, they will not believe the *wisdom of God in a mystery*. Is this a time for Christians to look with a stoical indifference and palsied apathy upon the awful increase of Infidelity and free-thinking in the professing Church. Where is the union with which we ought to be meeting the common enemy ? where is the broad platform of that universal Christian brotherhood of all who *know the truth*, and hold the head even Jesus ? Are not Christians still wearing the parti-coloured garments of exclusiveness and bitter sectarianism, instead of the one seamless robe of Christ and him crucified.

Will the learned critic, who may read these pages, remember the useful aphorism, "In every work regard the author's end." And may the God of all grace, who despises not the feeblest effort tending to promote His honour, accept the mite which is here cast into His treasury : may He, who with a worm can "thresh the mountains," by his Spirit work effectually by it in the hearts of those into whose hands it may fall, for Christ's sake.

H. B. W.

S E R M O N.

Ephesians v. 32.—*This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.*

CHRIST is the centre and heart of this portion of Scripture, as He is of the whole Bible. The sum of the Scriptures is the gospel; the sum of the gospel is Christ; the Scriptures are the system, Christ is their central sun. The doctrine of this text, which we select as a foundation for a discourse upon the *Mysteries of Christ's Kingdom*, is the union and relation subsisting between Christ and his Church. The point we aim at in our remarks upon this passage, is to show, that God requires from us an implicit belief in all His revealed word and will. Although all the essential truths of the gospel, are to carnal reason, incomprehensible, we having actually no ideas of their existence: yet, being plainly revealed to us by the Spirit of truth, they are no longer secret mysteries, but plain and clear truths presented to our faith for belief, rather than to our reason for speculation; while the *manner* of their existence is incomprehensible to reason, the *matter* and fact of their existence is clear to faith. And further, that the work of grace in the soul is supernatural; that the plantation of a sinner in the true Church of Christ is the work of the Almighty One, and that the invariable mode by which God draws a sinner, is through the word of truth which the Father himself has given, the record of his Son, the Incarnate Mystery.

Instead, then, of telling you that we are only required to believe what we can understand and reconcile, I would show you that we are required to believe and esteem every Bible truth, the whole mystery of Godliness, as precious objects of our faith. In these last days, when *men will not endure sound doctrine but are turned unto fables*; preferring human systems to Divine revelations of truth, popularized, rationalized theories of natural religion, to the *glorious gospel of the blessed God*, it behoves us to present the distinctive truths and principles of the gospel, which put honour on the word of God, and on the work of the

N. B.—The passages in Italics are quoted from the Scriptures.

Holy Spirit. To exhibit the Mystery of Godliness as indeed a great mystery, and exalt the pure religion of Jesus Christ as something infinitely above nature's reach, making true Godliness the effect of the independent operation of Almighty God. His workmanship, a new creation wherein a new nature is implanted, even to the very root, *from* which all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed. For *every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.*

Let us now endeavour to illustrate this truth in the light of Scripture. For method's sake we may take the words as they stand in the text, suggesting a natural division of our subject.

Let me then speak—I. Concerning Divine mysteries, generally.

II. Concerning this particular mystery—*this great mystery.*

III. Concerning *Christ.*

IV. Concerning the *Church.*

V. Lastly, make some practical improvement of the subject in application to ourselves.

And while we speak and hear, I pray that the Lord the Spirit may quicken, humble, and sanctify our minds, that we may be enabled to realize these blessed truths in our own experience; that we may be *lead into all truth*, that souls may be edified, truth manifested, and God glorified, for Christ's sake. Our remarks are merely suggestive hints, glimpses of truth, to direct you to the study of the Scriptures referred to in the sequel of this discourse.

I. Mysteries.—There are mysteries in the kingdom of nature, as well as in the kingdom of grace, which surpass the highest powers of created intelligence to comprehend; God is alike mysterious in His works as in His word; we believe the account of the creation although we cannot comprehend it. The Bible does not explain the mysteries of either empire; the inspired writers state facts and results, not processes. God does not require us to believe in the nature and manner, but in the matter and fact of revealed mysteries. Although we cannot comprehend them we are obliged to believe from the heart all the mysterious truths of revelation respecting our salvation. Should any of these seem to contradict each other, it arises altogether from the finite nature of our own minds. Instead therefore, of rejecting some parts of God's word and labouring to reconcile other apparently paradoxical statements of eternal truth by systems of human invention, we must humbly receive each and all in the simplicity of faith, as God has been pleased to reveal them. It is evident then, that

mystery must characterize every communication from an infinite to a finite mind, and that, as God is a mystery, *for who by searching can find out God*, a Bible without mystery, would, in the nature of things, be just a Bible without a God. If we adopt the rational theory "to believe nothing that we cannot understand;" that whatever doctrines are involved in mystery, ought, for that reason, to be rejected as false. Now is not this, not only absolute infidelity but absolute folly. Must we not renounce our senses, as well as our faith. We cannot satisfactorily explain any of the phenomena of nature, therefore we are to believe no revelation of science. We are not to believe that God created the world because we cannot comprehend how He made it, thus the only way to be orthodox Christians is to turn infidels, and throw philosophy into the same grave with Christianity. The mysteries of nature are just as great as the mysteries of grace, but not so repugnant to the natural heart; and why?—because there is no redemption, no humbling doctrines of the cross, involved in those facts. The wisest philosopher knows no more than a child how a blade of grass grows, nor can he explain the real properties of an atom that floats in the air, or of a particle of sand upon the sea shore. And surely to deny the existence of these bodies because we know not *how* they exist is not very wise. Men are walking by faith in scientific as well as in religious investigations. If there is any force in the maxim, that our faith should go no farther than our ideas, then we must deny the existence of any object of nature, and the reality of all revealed truth in the Bible. Because we have no accurate knowledge of any object of nature, or of any truth in revelation we must deny the existence of God and of our own being. Surely this would not be very orthodox. A heathen philosopher teaches a more excellent way. When some of Epictetus' scholars observed to him that they could not comprehend his nature, although he had told them many excellent things concerning God. To this the stoic answered, "Were I able fully to set forth God, I must either be God myself, or God himself must cease to be."

The Bible, in its spiritual meaning, has ever been a sealed book to the natural mind. I Corinthians ii. 14. It is, I grant, an easy thing to acquire correctly a head knowledge of the *truth as it is in Jesus*; but the Spirit can alone reveal the deep things of God so as to influence the heart and uplift the veil which spiritual blindness and unbelief have cast around us. *Eye hath not seen nor ear heard—But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* The glories of gospel grace are hid and sealed alike from the learned and unlearned. *The world by wisdom knew not God. The wisdom of the wise perisheth. The understanding*

of the prudent is hid. The term mysteries has special reference to Christ and his kingdom established on earth in the hearts of men. *The kingdom of God is within you. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom,* Colossians i. 26, 27; I Timothy iii. 16; Ephs. iii. 3, 4, 9. It is manifest from these passages and from the uniform tenor of Scripture, that an experimental knowledge of the gospel can only be attained through the divine teaching of the Spirit and the word.

2dly. Now there are some important inferences which follow from these considerations. The real cause of all unbelief is not because the head *cannot* comprehend the great mysteries of Christianity, but simply because the heart *will* not believe them; it is enmity against the moral perfections of God as they are revealed in the Bible, that makes Divine truth *hard to be understood*. It is not the understanding, but the will that is opposed to the gospel, and the humbling doctrines of the cross. Mystery, is not the sole nor the real cause of man's aversion to the gospel. There is nothing in the doctrines of the Trinity, twofold nature of Christ, conversion, regeneration, resurrection, or in any of the doctrines of Christianity, considered merely in themselves, to provoke or offend, however they may baffle and puzzle our reason. What offends the natural mind, therefore, is not the incomprehensibleness of the gospel mysteries, as mere mystery, but the redemption involved in the facts. How inveterate the enmity of the natural heart, seeing it can believe and admire the Divine power and goodness in nature, and deny it in grace; trace the omnipotence of God in creation, and trample upon it in redemption.

3dly. We learn that Christ's ministers have a warrant and Divine authority for preaching the *mysteries of the kingdom*. Our Apostle desired the prayers of the Church, that *God would open a door of utterance unto him to speak the mysteries of Christ that he might present every man perfect in Christ*. The preaching of the gospel in all its fullness is the appointed means for the *ministry of the Spirit*. *Preach the word*, is the command. *The word of the truth of the gospel* is the appointed instrument to convert and regenerate the sinner, and to sanctify the converted. *Born again by incorruptible seed of the word of God*. It was when Peter was yet speaking the word that the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard. *I have not shunned to declare unto you the counsel of God*. Teaching us that nothing should be concealed or reserved, but all truth, both in doctrine and practice, fully opened and enforced. *The truth as it is in Jesus* implies the whole truth, not mere authorised selections. Cecil has well said, "Half the truth is a lie." Logic and scholastic literature have added nothing to God's truth, but have, very

often, bewildered the humble inquirer after it. The Lord has *hid His mysteries from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes.*

The Word of God is the foundation, the combustible, so to speak, upon which the Promethean spark of the Holy Spirit falls in conversion: and where most truth is spoken, we are to hope there will be most true conversions. While God can work without means, He ordinarily works effectually in the regeneration of sinners, by the instrumentality of the Word: therefore we must do God's work in God's own appointed way, if we would expect His blessing, for God will only bless His own truth. While all Evangelical Christians agree on the necessity of the Holy Spirit's work in the conversion of sinners, they differ widely as to the mode by which the Spirit works. Does the Holy Ghost convert the soul by a positive act of sovereign power, as in the case of Saul's conversion; or does He work mediately by the Word, informing the mind, winning the affections, and changing the heart, by the instrumentality of Scripture truth. Surely the latter is the ordinary mode by which the Spirit works. He proposes the truths, the mysteries of Christianity, to the mind, and then disposes the mind and will to receive and believe them. Hence the promise—*He that believeth shall be saved.* Thus *Lydia's heart was opened by the things that were spoken by Paul, and, our beloved brother Paul, who according to the wisdom given unto him, hath spoken some things hard to be understood.*

4thly. Therefore, it is, my hearers, that I would preach the Word in all its fulness unto you, mysterious though it be; ever remembering that *all Scripture is profitable for doctrine and instruction in righteousness.* I would speak unto you *not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which God the Holy Ghost teacheth.* And is it not especially necessary to preach the mysteries of the Gospel, in these days of infidelity, unsettled views, uncertain sounds, rationalistic tendencies, and loose gospeling. The almost universal creed of the rising generation is that it matters little what a man believes so long as he is sincere in something. What is this but positive infidelity, absolute practical atheism. And is it not to be feared that many who suppress these mysteries and teach nothing better than natural religion, are sowing the seeds of infidelity, and laying the foundations of scepticism and rationalism deep and broad. The natural heart is, at this hour, as much opposed to the doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness as was the first rationalist Cain, who despised the blood of the typical sacrifice. The sole cause why men, and especially the most educated classes, hate the mysteries of Christianity is, because they enforce the necessity of spiritual regeneration, redemption by blood, and

sanctification by the Holy Ghost. My simple object is to show you the necessity of these things, and to lead you in faith and prayer to the mercy of God in Christ. I would direct you all to Christ, *in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*. I would exalt Christ, who *in all things must have the pre-eminence*. We must not exalt learning and human philosophy above Divine truth; like Pilate placing the *Hebrew, Greek, and Latin up over Christ's head*. No, no. Pride of intellect was the first sin, and will be the last; and is the cause of all the rationalism which now deluges our land.

But let us come nearer to our text and speak concerning—

II. *This great mystery*, the mysterious union subsisting between Christ and His Church. Read the context from 23rd verse.* Here Adam's relationship to Eve is adverted to as emblematical of the Saviour's union with His Church. Adam's marriage seems to be represented as a type of this union. The Apostle referring to Adam's words, that Eve was *bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh*, says: *for we (believers) are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*—obviously meaning, that all the life, grace, and glory, which the Church has, is derived from Christ, even as the woman was taken out of the man. The marriage union between Adam and Eve contained a mystical signification, and bore a lively resemblance to a more excellent, intimate, and lasting union, surpassing our comprehension—the spiritual, eternal union which subsists between Christ the head and the living members of His mystical body the Church. As Eve was taken out of Adam's side when he was asleep, so the Church, the *Lamb's Wife*, the Bride, was begotten, in a spiritual manner, by virtue proceeding from the side of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the Husband of His people (Isaiah liv. 5), when His side was pierced, while He slept the sleep of death, in order that we might live with him for ever. Now this is a *great mystery*, upon which we shall not indulge in any practical reflections, further than to remark that we believe in the actual, vital, eternal union subsisting between Christ and every true believer, every living member of His blood-bought flock—simply because God has revealed it. A union which proves an actual interest and title to all the benefits procured by the Saviour's obedience and death, as the representative, federal head and substitute of his people.

2dly. This actual union of heart and affection to Jesus is brought about by faith, *for ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus*. Faith is the mystical ring, the bond of eternal union which weds the soul to Christ in the indissoluble ties of covenant love. By

faith we receive supplies out of His fulness: by faith, we hold sweet communion with Jesus: by faith, the up-hill journey of life is turned into an *Emmanuel* journey, when *Jesus talks with us by the way* and causes our hearts to burn within us as we reflect upon his wondrous love to us miserable sinners. Blessed Jesus, adorable Saviour, how cold is our love to thee—how feebly do we apprehend the mystery of thy love to us—the glories of thy person—the perfection of thine atonement. This intimate relation and eternal connection between Christ and His people are essential to spiritual life and continuance in grace. The life which Christ gives is eternal life. *I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. Because I live ye shall live also.* Romans viii. 35. Yet, our faithless hearts will not allow us to appropriate these precious promises to ourselves. The life of Christ in the soul is the life and soul of all true religion. Christ, in this near relation to his people, comes home to the believer's heart endeared to his warmest affections; not only on account of what He has done for us in His death; but in the nearness of affinity in which he is united to us, as a living Jesus, an ever present Saviour; a husband, friend, and brother born for adversity. Is not this a great mystery—ay, it is; but, under the Spirit's teaching, it is very blessed to the believer's heart and experience.

While our Lord adverted to this spiritual union in the sixth chapter of John's Gospel, the Jews murmured at him: and even his disciples did not relish the subject but said—*this is a hard saying; who can bear it.* Christ then taught them that He dwelt in those who spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood,—such as, by faith, receive him, and live upon his fulness. "Then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us: then, we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." May we, dear friends, so by faith realize this blessed union; then when we partake of the commemorative ordinance of the Holy Communion of His body and blood, shall we be "meet partakers of those holy mysteries which Christ has instituted and ordained, as pledges of His love, and for a continual remembrance of His death, to our great and endless comfort." Why then, friends, do ye keep at such a distance from Jesus; why, like the women, do ye follow Him afar off. I'll tell you why, because you have never realized this living union with a living Saviour, because you have not realized the perfect and full humanity of Christ, of whose person and mediatorial work, we shall now speak.

III. *Christ*—His Person and Work. Archbishop Leighton, the father of expository preachers, has said—"There is nothing that so much concerns a Christian to know as the excellency of Jesus Christ's person and work; so that it is always pertinent to insist much on that subject."

With such authority may I not express a fear, that too little is insisted upon, too little is said of Christ's person, in the topical preaching of our day. Now, it may be, that some among you have never given five minutes consideration to this subject. Let me now remind you of what the Scriptures speak concerning Christ—what He is in Himself—what He is in relation to His Church—what He is in relation to every individual believer. I refer you to the following Scriptures, that you may read and examine the word of truth for yourselves. I have no favorite scheme of Theology to support; my sole object is to lead you to *search the Scriptures*. Colossians i. 15-19; ii. 9-12; iii. 1-12. Ephesians i. 22, 23; ii. 18-22. In this connection there is a short sentence, consisting of three short words, which I would commend to you for a confession of faith—it is this—*Christ is all*. Here is a diamond edition of Theology, a full length portrait of Christianity—here is the centre and focus where all the rays of Divine wisdom, mercy and justice converge—here, *righteousness and peace kiss each other*—here is the only true criterion of Christian doctrine.

Now, if we know anything of the one-ness and closeness of affinity which we have been speaking of, then we realize the value of this precious sentence, this centre-prop of a quickened sinner's hope—*Christ is all*. Why, Christians, do ye not enjoy more of Christ's presence, in your religion—because you never contemplate your Saviour as ever present with you, as a living Saviour: because you do not act faith upon Christ, as your *high priest who is touched with a feeling of your infirmities*: We cannot know, or feel the consolations afforded by the atonement and satisfaction of Christ, until we realize the perfect humanity of Christ as our God-man mediator, who is *not ashamed to call us brethren* and *who ever liveth to make intercession for us*. It is not a dead, but a living Christ, not the symbolical cross, but the person of Christ himself, that can comfort the seeking soul.

The doctrine of Christ's humanity is, perhaps, but little understood. It is of the utmost importance, that Christians who are to be saved from Hell through believing, should know *what* they believe. That they should be able to rest their souls upon the facts, the solid facts on which the hope of their salvation rests. The Devil is ever undermining the facts that are revealed in the Scriptures concerning the character and person of Christ. The perfect humanity of Christ is one of those facts. Now, this is a *great mystery*. One human system of religion impugns the Divinity and takes away the Godhead of Jesus; and thus, takes away all salvation from man. Another takes away the manhood of Christ; while it is acknowledged in so many words, they take away the

humanity of Christ—that is, they exalt Jesus so high above humanity that the poor sinner cannot come near it, cannot close with Jesus, cannot come to Jesus himself, like the poor woman who *came trembling when she heard of Jesus and touched his garment*—but must have some saint or angel, or other mediator to intercede for him. But the glory of the Gospel consists, not only in the Godhead, but in the humanity of Jesus. He is as close now to every seeking soul as he was to the weeping Mary at the sepulchre: he is close to us every moment, one with us: so that no sinner could come nearer to a friend or brother and pour out his sorrows before him, than every poor broken-hearted penitent can now come to Jesus. Hence, our blessed Redeemer is said to be *a man that receiveth sinners*.

What do we know, friends, of these blessed mysteries: are we thus united to Christ? can you regard Christ as your brother, friend and husband? can you say *my beloved is mine, and I am his*? Is the day of your soul's espousals past? has the Spirit won your affections? If so, come weal, come woe, happy are ye, blessed are ye: the love of Christ changeth not; He will love and cherish you, and will not part you at death: *his rod and staff will comfort you through the dark valley*; He will take all your legal responsibilities upon himself, and pay your debts contracted before and after marriage, and change your name from *Marah* (bitterness) to *Naomi* (beautiful) and give you his own name as is said in Jeremiah—*this is the name wherewith he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness*.

Again, 2dly. Christ is the fountain source of all wisdom and knowledge. *In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and Christ, as the *messenger of the covenant*, is the appointed medium and channel through which Jehovah reveals His mind to man. All channels of revelation centre in Christ. Christ was *all* in that first revelation of mercy which was made to Adam. Genesis iii. 15. These words are an outline of the whole plan of redemption, containing the germ and elements of the *great mystery of Godliness*. Christ, before his incarnation, preached by his Spirit in his servant Noah to the antediluvian world. Christ has never left his Church altogether destitute of saving light. Christ was *all* in the preaching of Patriarchs, Prophets and Apostles. The one grand characteristic of the Apostle's preaching was *to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified*: they all conspired with holy ardor in lifting men's minds from off themselves and all human sources, and directing them to their crucified, risen, exalted, and interceding Lord. They represent Christ as the sole ordinance of God for giving the blessing, and the life of all Christian graces; and the quickening

spirit of all Christian ordinances—the Altar, Sacrifice, Priest and Temple. With them the atonement was not a mere abstract point of credence, but a vital principle; not a mere tenet of Christianity, but the sum of Christianity. Hence with them every subject of revelation, from the sublimest mystery of Heaven, to the plainest and most practical topic of morals and daily practice derived its virtue, life and impulse from the cross. With them all morality, out of Christ, was no better than Paganism. They never introduced any subject, nor established any truth, urged any duty, explained any service, nor enforced any ordinance, without direct reference to the sacrifice, example, and person of Christ. With them, the purest motives, the best deeds, were defiled and worthless, unless sanctified with the *blood of sprinkling*. With them, no work could be considered a good work, until the doer of it, the worker, was accepted of God, justified by the blood and imputed righteousness of Christ.

But, was the simple teaching and pure morality of the Apostles appreciated and relished by the Jews and early converts to Christianity? Ah no—they, like ourselves, were slow to learn these simple lessons. They were offended with the spirituality and simplicity of Christian worship, because they understood not its mysteries nor felt its power; because, like too many Christians now, they had no communion of soul with the soul of Christ: they preferred the heartless pageantry, and gorgeous ceremonial of the Temple worship, to the heart-service of spiritual worship. My hearers, human nature is still the same. We have all Jewish hearts in this respect: the same tendency still exists, the same unwillingness to look to Christ's blood alone for salvation, to *submit to the righteousness of God*: the same tendency in all religious denominations to forget that God requires spiritual worship; and to substitute the scaffolding of the Church for the Church itself, the shadow for the substance of Christianity, the *form for the power of Godliness*.

3dly. While it is my solemn duty to teach you the necessity of personal holiness and good works as the ultimate end and essential evidence of Christianity; while I would urge you to the use of all the means of grace and a regular attendance upon all the ordinances of religion: while I exhort you to good works, to *present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God*, and to the diligent cultivation of all virtues; I would, at the same time, ever remind you that when all this is done, that the use of all these means is effectual only because Christ commands them and Christ blesses them. You must never lose sight of Christ and your need of His blood and grace. And, woe be to the man, who, in a proud, self-righteous, Cain-like spirit, neglects and despises these means and

ordinances, which Christ has appointed for His Church's edification and sanctification. While means of grace are not, necessarily, grace; be assured, that grace is given and increased in the use of means; and, perhaps, seldom found in those who wilfully neglect means. There are three states of religious mind with respect to ordinances;—to be entirely independent of ordinances, to be entirely dependent upon ordinances, to be entirely dependent upon Christ's blessing in the use of ordinances. May this last state be ours, for it is a superlatively blessed state.

Again, *Christ is all* in the volume of creation, because He is the author and subject of creation: *He created all things, and all things were created for his glory.* Colossians i. 16. Redemption was the object and ultimate end of creation, which is a mystery, that God's glory in Christ and his Church, can alone explain. The redemption of man was a primary step to the creation of man. This earth, viewed in the light of redemption, (and this is the scriptural view) is just the stage upon which the mysterious work of redemption was executed; and when that work is completed, we are expressly told, this world will be destroyed. II Peter iii. 10. When the spiritual temple, the Church, is completed, the material building will be no longer required. The mediatorial office and undertaking of Christ is not represented in the Bible as an afterthought arising out of the fall of Adam; as if God had been disappointed in his first design. No, no. The fall of the first Adam was foreseen and provided for in the person of Christ the second Adam, the *Lamb slain* in the counsels of Jehovah, before the foundations of this earth were laid. The consecration of the second person of the Trinity, to the office of Mediator was settled in the eternal covenant between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Lo I come* (Christ) *in the volume of the book it is written of me.* Read Psalm xl. This earth is not to be regarded merely as one among millions of other similar habitations, according to the Humanitarian Philosophy, but the consecrated stage and scene of a special dispensation of grace.

In this view of creation, the Christian regards this world as Christ's world, and worships his Creator as the God of the Bible, a covenant God in Christ; not, as the Deist's God, Cain's God, the God of creation only; God of the cornfield, the mill and the mill; but as the God of redemption in Christ for whose glory it was created. The mere natural man pays homage to God as his Creator, and can praise Him for temporal benefits upon Thanksgiving day; while he rejects divine truth, the mysteries of redemption, as revealed in the Bible. He can praise the divine goodness in nature, and hate it in grace; trace it with rapture in creation, and

laugh at it in redemption; laud and magnify it in a star and despise it in the sun of Righteousness. This is essential infidelity, as now developed in modern "Rationalism."

The Christian must ever regard this world as Christ's world: on His account Jehovah looks upon our little planet as the glory of creation, the Bethlehem of the universe. *And thou earth, though thou be little among the thousands of planets, yet thou art the greatest and most glorious for out of thee has come forth He that is to be ruler in Israel.* Micah v. 2. The truth is creation is subservient to redemption, the handmaid of salvation. The special object of creation, was just to supply a tent for the Good Shepherd and a fold for his sheep: a temple for his church to worship in—a birth-place for God manifest in the flesh—a manger-cradle for Him who was the world's Father, and the maker of his own mother—an altar for the Lamb of God to die upon,—wood to burn the sacrifice: to afford a *roek*, from whence to hew his *living stones*; a *pit* from whence to *dig* his vessels of honour: to afford a reed for the King of Glory's sceptre, thorns for his crown, a tree for his cross, a rock for his sepulchre. May we not then say that Christ is all in creation.

Is not this a great mystery? Why then do Christians not contemplate creation in this light; why do they not see Christ in all things. You will find the answer in I Cor: ii. 14; xiv. 22; or in the words of Bishop Horne when he says that meditations upon evangelical subjects are only intended for those who believe—"who will exercise their faculties in discerning and contemplating the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven."

Christ is all in the volume of Providence, because Jehovah makes all human events subservient to his Glory and the accomplishment of his glorious purposes in Christ. In every age events are overruled, and instruments are raised up for the furtherance of his divine designs and the grand consummation of prophecy, when *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.*

Christ is all in the volume of inspired truth. What are the Scriptures without Christ—a dark system without a sun; a labyrinth of mysteries without a key. Without Christ for an interpreter, the Old Testament cannot be understood. Its rites and ceremonies, its altars and sacrifices, out of Christ, would be an offence to God, evoking the rebuke—*who hath required this at your hands.* Christ is the one great and glorious object to which the whole law, types and prophecies point, and in whom they all, like rays of light converging in one centre, find their end and termination. Christ is the sum and substance of all the promises in the Bible. There is just as much evangelical truth in the Old Testament as in the New,

only differently developed. The Old and New Testament Church were one and the same, only under different capacities. Christ is the glorious repository of all things in Heaven and in Earth. The Church on earth has no resource for life or grace but in him; neither hath the Church in Heaven, to derive glory from, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Scriptures are the system, Christ is its central sun: the Scriptures are the field, Christ the *hidden treasure*: the Scriptures are the garden, Christ the *tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God*. The Old Testament, is Christ promised; the New, is Christ given; the Old, is Christ concealed; the New, is Christ revealed: *Christ is all* in revelation. A person may attain a critical and grammatical knowledge of the Old Testament history and still continue with *a veil upon his heart when Moses is read*—an utter stranger to the spiritual sense of the book which testifies of Christ throughout. The prophetic, evangelical, mystical, spiritual sense, is the life and soul of the Bible.

Of the things which we have spoken concerning Christ, this is the sum—Christ sits on the throne of creation, for He created all things: He sits on the throne of Providence, for He overrules all things to his own glory: He sits on the throne of grace, as mediatorial king; He sits enthroned in his people's hearts: He shall sit upon his millennial throne, *ruling all principalities and powers*: He will sit upon his scarlet throne of judgment, *to render unto every man according to his deeds*.

Endeavor then, Christians, to contemplate all creation and providence with a single eye to Christ, and the universe will become a temple consecrated to his praise; every village, a Bethany; every house, a Bethel; every day, a sabbath; your life, a continuous doxology. Whenever you look abroad, you will see sacred mementos of the Man of Sorrows, hallowing, sanctifying, elevating in their influences. It is the idea of Christ in all things, and all things for Christ's glory, that sanctifies material creation, and sheds light and beauty over the whole face of nature and clothes her smiling landscape with hues of divine loveliness. It is the glory of this earth that the mysteriously begotten Son of Mary was born, lived and died upon it; the glory of the sea, that He, the companion of poor fishermen, trod its azure pavement; the glory of the air, that He breathed it; the glory of man, that Christ *was* and *is* his brother. Try then, and cultivate this Christ glorifying spirit, and thus you will walk with God in thought, whether exploring the field of nature, Providence or grace; you will be Christians everywhere, whether at your business, your pleasures, or your prayers. To a spiritual mind, a hut, a hovel is a Heaven, because Christ is there.

When you look down upon this earth, reflect that *there* Christ was

buried; that *He* went down into the *lower parts of the earth*, into the tomb to sanctify the grave for you. When you look up to the Heavens, and behold the *sun shining in his strength* and survey the sky jewelled with its starry brilliants glittering upon the brow of night, and the chaste moon walking in her beauty, and the bow, bent by the hand of Him who sat at the fire side of Lazarus, compassing the Heaven about with a glorious circle—when you contemplate all these wonders of Christ's creation, will you not be reminded of many spiritual analogies which will instruct you in the mysteries of faith—will your thoughts not be led to Him who is the sun, the fountain of life, and heart of the spiritual world; and will not the fair empress of the night robed in her peerless majesty shining with a borrowed light, a lustre not her own, remind you of the *Church*, as wholly dependent upon the *Sun of Righteousness* for all her light, life and beauty: in herself dark, *black as the tents of Kedar*, but when adorned with His righteousness—*fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners*. This is the Church of which we would now speak a few words.

IV. *Church*.—Mankind never did agree upon any religious topic since the controversy between Cain and Abel. The first man who ever died, died for religion. But there is no religious topic upon which men have disagreed so extensively, as the subject of the Church; and, perhaps, there is no disagreement, or misunderstanding which has been more injurious to the peace and harmony of Christians, than the misunderstanding of this subject. Therefore, methinks, that it is a very befitting subject for me to say a word or two upon, when I am preaching the Gospel to a congregation composed of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and perhaps to some who have never been connected with any Church. While I do not expect to make you all think alike upon all points of lesser moment, on which the wisest and best Christians have held a great diversity of opinion; yet, I hope that we all agree upon the grand, essential, vital truths which involve man's eternal salvation.

The term *Church* is used by all religious bodies to represent that particular denomination to which they belong. The Independent and Free Church-man talk of the Church as if they alone were the centre of infallibility. Let me show you, in as few words as perspecuity will allow, what is the primary meaning in which the term is used in the Bible. *First*—the name—*Secondly*—a few of its distinctive characteristics.

The word Church literally means a people called out: that is, a people called from the service of Satan to the service of God; or, it means the house of the Lord, God's spiritual temple built of *living stones*. Thus Paul characterizes believers *God's building: a habitation of God through the*

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Spirit. Having an High Priest over the house of God. By the Church is uniformly meant in Scripture, the whole body of believers, of which Christ is the head. Our Lord himself fixes the meaning of the word where He tells his disciples to *rejoice because their names were written in Heaven*. By the Church, therefore, is meant true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ of every age, nation and kindred, the whole body of Christ both in Heaven and Earth. In our Communion Service it is denominated the "blessed company of all faithful people: members incorporate in the mystical body of Christ;" the Church of our text, the Church of the Bible, is God the Father's redeemed family, God the Son's *Meek Bride*, God the Holy Ghost's sanctified *Temple*. This is the *flock of Christ*—the *royal priesthood*—*chosen generation*,—*peculiar people*—*light of the world*—the *salt of the earth*.

Secondly.—Characteristics of the Church—1st. MYSTERY—yes, mysterious is the union of the divine and human natures in Christ the Church's head, *his name shall be called Wonderful*. Mysterious, the vital and spiritual union subsisting between Christ and his faithful ones. It is however a plainly revealed Scripture fact: and our duty is to state, not what may appear most rational for God to reveal, but simply what God *has* revealed. While this union is so mysterious and ineffable, infinitely transcending every conception of our finite minds; yet, it is so near and intimate as to bear some distant resemblance to the one-ness of the three persons of the Godhead. This is not a dogma of the Schools, but an inspired truth taught us by the special revelation of Christ himself, when He prayed for his Church. *That they all may be one; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us*. This union, is a mystery, not of man's invention, but of God's revelation. It is plain and clear to God. Mystery is only another name for our ignorance. The mechanism of creation is to us mysterious, not so to God, to whom nature is art. All around us is mystery—man is a mystery, God is a mystery, heaven is a mystery, hell is a mystery; but great as all divine mysteries are, as God's revelation to us, we must in simple faith admire them, and gaze upon them in holy wonder, love and praise. When the Holy Ghost sheds light upon them, they will teach us humility, and cause us to presume less on our own judgment.

Another grand feature of the Church is *Divine PRESENTIALITY*.—*Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Christ in you the hope of glory*.

SPIRITUALITY.—This is an essential feature of Christ's Church. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his*. Romans viii. 14; xiv. 17.

REDEMPTION.—It is a redeemed Church. Redemption is always spoken of in Scripture in a vicarious sense, as an atonement made, not only for sin, but for sinners; a substitutionary sacrifice; a ransom paid for certain characters—all believers. *Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price—to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.* The song of the redeemed beautifully attributes the redemption of the Church to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, *thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.* Redemption is a fact, a finished work. *It is finished.*

VOCATION.—It is a called Church. I Corinthians i. 2. Romans i. 6; viii. 30. Effectual calling by the Holy Ghost in conversion and regeneration are represented in Scripture, as essentially necessary to the individual salvation of a sinner, as the work of Christ. The believer is under equal obligation to the three persons of Jehovah. The work of Christ and the work of the Spirit, are mutually necessary to each others efficacy. Without the atoning work of Christ, there would have been no salvation for sinners: without the quickening, sin-convincing converting work of the Holy Ghost, no sinner would accept that salvation. The great work of applying the benefit of Christ's death, sprinkling the blood of Christ upon the individual conscience and soul, is in a special way the office of the Spirit. John xvi. 7. Christ finished the work of salvation upon the cross; the Holy Spirit begins the work of salvation in the soul.

Is not this mystery clearly revealed in the typical sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, it was not enough that the blood was shed, but *that* blood must be sprinkled upon the lintels of the doors with hyssop; figuring to us the work of the Spirit in applying the efficacy of the great sacrifice to the individual heart. Christ has opened the prison door, but the prisoners will not come out. "They fancy music in their chains, and so forget their load;" until the Holy Ghost *says to the prisoners, go forth*, no spell-bound sinner will ever come trembling to the feet of Jesus, crying, *what must I do to be saved.* Christ by his death, has rolled away the stone from the door of the grave of dead, corrupt humanity; but, no Lazarus will arise, no soul *dead in sin* will be *quickened*, until the Holy Spirit gives the command, *Loose him, and let him go!*

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION.—It is a justified and sanctified Church. We join these two cardinal doctrines together; while they are essentially distinct, they are inseparably connected, and what God has joined together, we must not put asunder. The one signifies our title to, the other, our *meetness for the inheritance of the Saints of light.*

The one expresses what Christ has done for us; the other, what He works in us; the one is a *relative*, the other a *real* change. The doctrines of Christianity are prefigured in the facts of Christianity. These two doctrines of a living Church were revealed to us on the cross of Calvary, in the water and the blood that flowed from the Redeemer's side.

"To be of sin the double cure;
To acquit from guilt and make us pure."

These are the two grand arteries flowing from the heart of Jesus Christ, conveying life, and causing spiritual circulation through all the members of his mystical body. As in the symbol of the vine and the branches: As the sap from the parent trunk permeates the branches, and makes them bear fruit, so does the life and grace of Christ animate all believers, and enable them to bear the *peaceful fruits* of righteousness. *This is a great mystery! It is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.*

While much is said, well said, and written about justification by the blood and righteousness of Christ, being the article of a standing or a falling church; perhaps, too little is said and written about regeneration of heart and life, by the Spirit of Christ, being the article of a living or dying church. The church that is without Christ's righteousness, is destitute of the only element of its standing; the church that is without the Holy Spirit's work, has no element of life. Therefore, it is just as necessary that we should preach to you the necessity of spiritual regeneration and fitness for Heaven, by the work of God's Spirit, as that we should preach the necessity of a title to Heaven by the work of God's Son.

ANTIQUITY.—It is an ancient Church. Numbers, tradition and antiquity, are not certain criteria of a true church. Error does not become venerable and command respect, merely because it is old. Truth has ever been in a minority, Christ's Church has ever been a little flock. The Church of Christ has the only true claim to antiquity; she is not only Patristic but Apostolic; her members quote the authority of the apostles, prophets and patriarchs; they date back to the ancient archives of the everlasting covenant; her members are an ancient people, *chosen in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid*. If antiquity commands respect and veneration, what can parallel the cross in all the elements of a true antiquity; before the suns of the mornings sang together, and celebrated a new-born world, even then the cross was erected upon the high and holy hills of Jehovah's councils standing forth in prominent relief, the one central object, shedding its splendors upon

the past, and casting its glories upon the future, the only hope of them that should believe to the end of time.

CATHOLICITY.—It is the Holy Catholic Church, because all its members are holy; people doubly holy, through the *imputed* and *imparted* righteousness of Christ. Catholic, because her members are gathered out of the whole world; her pale is the universe. *I will bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth. I will hiss for them and I will gather them, for I have redeemed them.* Because her doctrines are catholic—one body and one Spirit; one Lord, one faith one baptism, one God and Father of all. *All have sinned: all the world are become guilty before God, that he might have mercy upon all. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden. Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters: and the Spirit and the bride say come, and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* This is catholic doctrine. Catholic, because her religion and worship are circumscribed by no natural, conventional boundaries, and are suited to every people, country and age; it has no peculiar exemptions or privileges for any sex, age, order, or degree; all are one in Christ. *Jew and gentile, bond and free. The righteousness of Christ is unto and upon all that believe, for there is no difference.*

The Gospel is the religion of sinners, not of sectaries; it is designed to be universal, immortal; it speaks a language that all can understand, and in tones that all must feel. Catholic, because all its members have large hearts, expanding with love and charity to all the particular compartments of the universal church; recognizing every man as a friend and brother, who *loves the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, and consecrates his being to the glory of his Saviour, who opened his arms on the *accursed tree* to embrace a lost world, when emptying his heart of all but love; and I believe, just in proportion as Christians are destitute of this catholic spirit, which can rejoice in the success of all churches where Jesus records his blessed name, are they going back to the exclusivism of Judaism, and receding from the glorious dispensation of Gospel liberty. The tabernacle of Christ's Church, is the universe; her temple is open at the top, lighted from above by the sunshine of a Father's love. But when the congregation is all complete, when the flock is all gathered in, of which *not a hoof will be left behind*, this temple of living stones will be roofed in with a crowning dome of glory, and the *headstone thereof will be brought forth with shoutings of grace—grace unto it.*

"Grace all the work shall crown."

UNITY.—Church unity is not rigid uniformity in externals, but internal spiritual identity. As the physical unity of the whole human family is traceable to one common centre, so all the redeemed family derive their features of spiritual unity from Christ their head, the second Adam.

DIVISION.—Is another characteristic of the Church of Christ, not essentially, but accidentally, owing to the infirmities and sins of her members. Like the disciples in the infant church, Christians are still *falling out by the way*, and the question at issue is still the same, not who shall be the least in the kingdom of Heaven, *but who shall be the greatest?* The old heathens said of the young church, “behold how these Christians love one another!” What think ye would heathens say of the old church, that has *kings for her nursing fathers, and queens for her nursing mothers*, if they were to read our religious newspapers; perhaps it would be to this effect—behold how these lambs resemble wolves, how they *bite and devour one another*, how they hate one another. When Christians take common ground, and make common cause against a common enemy, sin and Satan, then, and not till then, will the world believe that we are the true followers of those who were *first called Christians at Antioch*. When all the evangelical churches take the Bible for their platform, Gethsemane and Calvary for their stand-points, and casting their little differences into the broad lap of frail humanity, rally round the cross as a common standard, all striving heart and hand, not merely to bring men into their pale, to wear their badge, and pronounce their Shibboleth, but to bring sinners into the arms of one common Saviour—all ambassadors for one king—all fighting the good fight of faith under one *Captain*, though wearing different uniforms—all facing the same enemies of their holy religion, though wearing different facings upon their religious creeds; when Christians thus go forth in a holy phalanx of hope and love, under the Omnipotent leadership of our conquering Emmanuel, then will the world believe that we are Christians indeed and in truth.

The Church is divided in its place of abode; one part is on earth, the other in Heaven—one in grace, the other in glory; one in the *holy place*, the other has passed the veil, and entered the *holy of holies*; one, like the tribe of Reuben, remains in the green pastures on this side Jordan; the other has passed over to the happy land of promise; one, like the family of Jacob, has crossed over the ford of Jabbok; the other, like the patriarch, tarries at this side to wrestle with the angel till the day dawn and the shadows flee away.

PROGRESSION.—The Church must progress. Grace must grow in the

Church collectively, and in the hearts of individual believers. The Lord *is adding daily to His Church such as shall be saved. The path of the just is as a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day.* There is an undercurrent of grace flowing gradually onward, though unseen and unregarded by the world.

The progress of the Church of Christ bears a strict and beautiful analogy to the progress of the Divine life in the soul of the individual believer. The growth of grace in the soul appears frequently to be suspended; the world, the flesh, and the devil, contend fiercely with the power and influence of the Gospel in the heart. The believer is often dismayed and ready to say with Rebekah, *if it be so with me, why am I thus* assailed by Satan; or with David, *I shall one day perish by the hand of Saul.* The life-giving truths of God are almost eradicated from the mind. But though we forget God, he will not forget himself, he will not deny himself. He carries on the purposes of his unmerited mercy in the hearts of his people, notwithstanding all our faithlessness. *Having loved his own, he loves them to the end.* So it is, has been, and will continue with respect to the progress of truth and the conquest of the Church in the world. Christ, by his truth, grace and spirit, will conquer all difficulties. The world and the devil, infidelity, rationalism and error in all its Protean developments, are now arrayed against the truth of God. Yet, when all seeming temporal hindrances and spiritual obstacles, and departures from the truth of the Gospel, seem to delay the glorious consummation of Jehovah's purposes in Christ, God's foundation standeth sure. All human events are made subservient to grace. Every thing is foreseen and provided for in every age; events are overruled to the furtherance of his divine designs, and instruments are raised up accurately adapted to achieve his peculiar objects.

God makes the *wrath of man to praise him.* Bad as well as good men have been promoting in different ways and with different motives, the same object, the extension of Christ's Kingdom on earth. The political Jehus, while battling with the weapons of carnal zeal for civil and religious liberty, are the apostles of the Prince of Peace, the heralds of the cross, without intending it. Ever since the days of the Babylonish, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman conquerors, instruments have been raised up in their respective spheres of action, to humble the tyrants of the earth, shiver the iron sceptres of despotism, and prepare a way for the missionaries of the Gospel. Oh! that the soldiers of Christ's kingdom would evince the same self-sacrificing zeal, as do those brave fellows, those heroes of freedom, who now appear upon the political stage sounding the trump of another Jubilee through the length and breadth of Christendom, filling

men's hearts with the enthusiasm of truth, and waking all Europe with the thunders of long dormant liberty and oppressed Christianity.

Providence is a great mystery. The all-important fact which history is every day disclosing is this—this world, with its complicated machinery, is Christ's world, and all passing events are subservient to the Church and the glory of God in Christ. This blessed truth is the only key to explain the mysteries of Providence. Facts are the alphabet of history. Although we cannot read clearly its mysterious page; although we cannot reconcile all the facts and events of history, cannot see how they are conducive to God's glory, and consistent with his attributes—yet, when the work is finished all will be legible, plain; and when the mystically interwoven tapestry of Providence is completed, all will be clear; when the volume is finished, one short sentence in golden letters will explain all its darkest lines—*Christ is all*.

DIMINUTION.—The Church militant is daily decreased to increase the Church triumphant; the empty chair and the vacant pew are contributing to fill the *many mansions* in glory. We mourn the absent friend, forgetful that to be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord; we sorrow when a voice is silenced in the family and congregational choir. Ah, but could we lift the veil that separates the eternal world from our view, we would rejoice that the ransomed choir is more complete, and the harps of Heaven more responsive.

"Tis sweet when year by year we lose
Friends lost to sight in faith, to muse
How grows in Paradise our store.

Whether the *trees of the Lord's right hand planting* are cut down by the scythe of death or the sword of persecution, they will flourish in perennial youth in Paradise. The promise is sure—*they who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God*. The Church, like the palm tree, the more it is crushed buds and shoots the more vigorously. Churches have been cut down almost to the very roots, and have been, and shall be visited with a spring-time of divine favor, sending forth from their hewn and trampled trunks branches of richest fruitfulness and living verdure covering the hills with the shadow of their boughs.

Lord send us a Penticostal shower and water our parched little vineyard with the dew of Thy blessing; and if in Thy mysterious Providence the *nether springs* of Thy bounty are stopped, close not from our thirsting souls the *upper springs of Thy grace*. *Fear not little flock*, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you *the kingdom*. Lastly:—

GLORIFICATION.—It is a glorious Church. Whom he justified them he also glorified. This is the Church that shall be truly glorious at the last. When all earthly glory shall have passed away, then shall this glorious Church be presented in the dew of her youth arrayed in fine linen clean and white at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Such are a few of the distinctive features of the Holy Catholic Church.

V. These are doctrinal mysteries but they have a practical aim and tendency. Doctrines are the great motives to duty; and the most mysterious of all doctrines, the doctrine of the cross, and spiritual union with Christ are made the groundwork by the apostles of all practical exhortations. The latter chapters of the Epistles to the Romans, Colossians, and Ephesians, you will please to read, as illustrations of this truth. The practical object of my remarks has been to lead you to the personal examination of your characters and condition in the sight of God; to lead us all to more humbling views of our own sinfulness, vileness, and wickedness by nature; and to higher views of the value and preciousness of Christ's work. Therefore, they know not whereof they affirm, and are libellers of the preaching of a full and free Gospel, who say that the setting forth the free sovereign grace of the Lord and the finished work of Christ, has a tendency to induce presumption and ungodliness of life. The apostles assert the very opposite; they declare, that the very cause and motive that must operate in the believer's breast to make him bring forth fruit to the glory of God, is the fact that he has been called by sovereign grace, and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. To tell a man to do good works before that he is influenced by Gospel motives and principles, is just to tell him to make bricks without straw, to perform the *whole duty* of man, before he had received any portion of the grace of God.

The practical object of this discourse has been to lead you to put this all-important question to your consciences—Am I a living member of Christ's Church, a child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven? Is Christ in me and I in Him; has he given me his nature, as I have taken his name?

Examine yourselves then, friends, and see what is the *ground of your hope*; whether the *Gospel has come to you in power or in word only*. May you be led childlike to the feet of Jesus, the great Prophet, to say: *Lord what I know not teach me*. Oh that the Holy Spirit may vouchsafe to make Christ a Saviour of life to you all. May Christ lift up your hearts for the outpouring of his wisdom, power and holiness; that you may see and know what is the *fellowship of the mystery, what the hope of your calling, and what the riches of the glory of your inheritance with*

the saints. Read Ephesians iii. 16-20. It is only the Spirit of the Lord God in a preached Christ, that can bring to the penitent sinner's heart the blessings of the glorious Gospel in all their full and apprehended reality and power.

May God of his infinite mercy enable you to put these questions seriously to your hearts. May we all seek to be kept near to Christ, that we may be kept near to one another and united in the bonds of the Gospel. Let us pray that our love to our Lord, to each other and to all mankind, may abound more and more; may the uniting Spirit of Christ knit us together in the blessed communion of the saints, that with one heart and one mind we may exert ourselves to advance the glory of God in promoting the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom and the common salvation of all our souls.

2dly. Let us value more the church privileges which we enjoy. I have no faith in the religion of the man who says, it matters little where we worship, and who does not consider his own church the best and love it the most. A love and predilection for our own particular church is not only natural but necessary. He who loves all churches alike, has never loved any aright, nor has any true love for God, nor can he be said to love the Universal Church if he is not visibly connected with one of its branches. A Christian without either shepherd or pasture is a most inconsistent character; his soul will derive little spiritual nourishment from the broad right of common which he claims.

To value any thing merely on account of its antiquity is little-minded, contemptible, but to undervalue what is valuable and excellent merely because it is ancient, is far more contemptible. While I love the Church universal and love all who *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*, I love my own Church the most, with almost a superstitious reverence; and that Church shall ever have the first place in my affections and the highest place in my prayers, which has connected with the land of my fathers' sepulchres so many time honored associations, and hallowed memories. The Church which I believe to be most catholic and scriptural in doctrine, most ancient and apostolic in origin, and most primitive in ritual; a Church which has given to the world, in her Liturgy and 39 Articles, the noblest composition of uninspired man, the fullest and most complete summary of divine truth that ever came from human pen. A Church that can number among her ministers such a bright galaxy of pious and learned divines, those great expositors of scripture, those mighty masters of moral and casuistic science, whose names and writings are synonymous with whatever is Scriptural in doctrine, sublime in thought, majestic in theme, rich, powerful and noble in elocution, strict

in logic, cogent in argument, and practical in tendency. Alas! that men should consider it a mark of superior sanctity to separate from a Church in communion with which such men lived, such men died.

May the Lord abundantly bless our Apostolic Church and make her a blessing to this land; may He lengthen her cords and strengthen her stakes; may righteousness be the foundation of her walls, truth and peace the ornament of her palaces; may Christ be the foundation of her faith, the ground of her union, and thus she shall be as she ever has been, the fortress of Protestantism and the bulwark of Gospel truth in the world. May the pure spark of apostolic zeal that was dropped from Heaven into the hearts of her Reformers and fanned into a seraphic flame in the hearts of her confessors who sealed their faith with their blood; may it never die or flicker upon her altar, till it is lost in the full effulgence and blessedness of the Millennial morn. Then *the Chief Shepherd* shall appear to separate the sheep from the goats, the chaff from the wheat. Then *there shall be one fold and one shepherd*; then there will be no difference between Christ's sheep, then all the wheat that has grown in Canaan, however it may have been separated by hedges on earth, when it is gathered into the heavenly garner, shall be God's wheat without one single mark to distinguish that once Christians differed in outward circumstances, modes and forms.

Lastly. My friends, let us not forget the *Church in the house*. Family religion is the most unmistakable test of Christian character; where two or three are met together in Christ's name, there is a true Church; wherever the believer has a tent, there God has an altar. It is in the family that we are to look for the most genuine fruits of righteousness, the most unmistakable evidences of *whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, if there be any virtue*, it is in the family and the life that we are to look for its most beautiful illustrations. May God enable us to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

We shall soon take an eternal farewell of another, and comparatively mis-spent year. This is a favourable point for reflection. Let us put to our consciences the question of Pharaoh to Jacob: How old art thou? how many years have I lived to God? how many years of my past life have been spent in the service of Satan or of God? One of these two masters I have been serving. How many Sabbaths have I devoted to my worldly business, how many to God. In the past year I have given to God or the devil seven weeks of precious Sabbaths, in the last seven years, I have given to God or the devil one entire year of precious Sabbaths, in fifty years, I have given to God or the devil seven years of precious Sabbaths. Solemn thought. Try and think this thought over.

We all differ in age, eircumstances, gifts and graces, but we all agree in this, we are all sinners; we must all die. Some of us must die soon; we must all die certainly. We must all tenant the dark chambers of the grave. The coffin, the winding-sheet, and the worm, are common marks of unity. The grave is the only earthly picture of equality; *there is neither small and great, and there the servant is free from his master.* There will be unity in the grave. The ashes of Ephraim and Judah will sleep peacefully together in the same urn. "What are you looking for, Diogenes, in that heap of rubbish," (said the monarch who sat upon the throne of the world, yet never learned to govern himself, or to solve that mysterious problem, *what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul,*) to which the sage replied, "I was just looking for your father Philip's bones, but I could not discern them from those of his slaves." Some, while the game of life, which moralists call chance, is being played, are kings, queens, knights, and some are humble little pawns, upon the checkered stage of society, moves, places and relative positions must be observed. But when the game is over, how altered is the ease, like chess-men thrown into a bag, the bones and ashes of kings and beggars commingle unceremoniously in the lap of mother-earth, awaiting the trump of God to summon an assembled world to the board of judgment. What a revolution will then take place; the first shall be last, and the last first. *May you, and I find mercy of the Lord in that day, for Christ's sake.*

I leave with you, the question, am I a king? do I belong to old Simon Peter's *royal priesthood*? Believers are *kings and priests* by birth, and extraction; in their relations and alliances. There is no gradation of rank among God's children, they all belong to the blood-royal of Israel: they are all on a footing of equality. *The brother, says the apostle, of low degree rejoices that he is exalted, and the rich in that he is made low. They are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Fellow sinners, its both a solemn and sublime thought, that there are but two kingdoms and two great alliances, the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of Satan: those who *will*, and those who *will not have Christ to reign over them.* To which kingdom do you belong?

I will conclude in the language of our Liturgy, praying, that "God who has knit together his elect in one communion and fellowship in the mystical body of His Son Jesus Christ, may grant us grace to follow the blessed saints in all godliness of living: that we being regenerate and made His children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit, through the same Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

