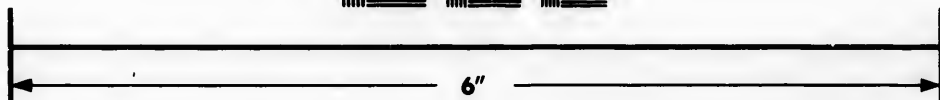
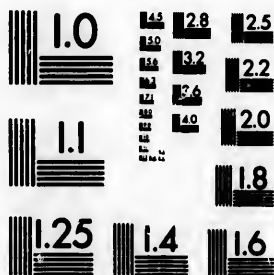


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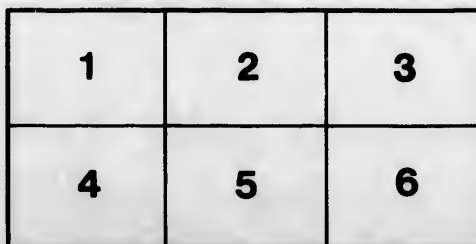
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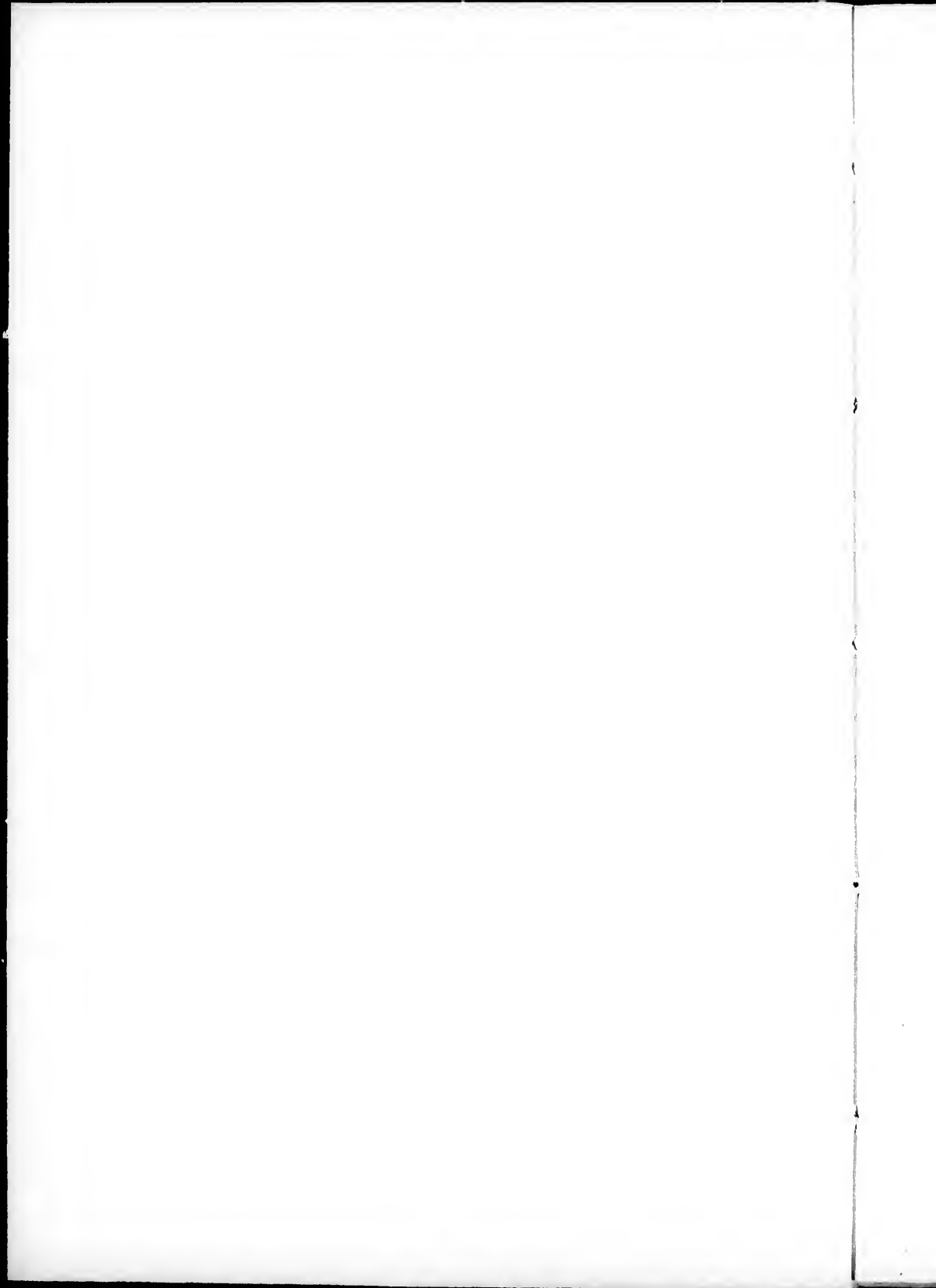
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Farewell sermon preached in
St. John's Church, Greenwich,
on Sunday, July 28th,
and in St. Peters Church, Westfield,
on Sunday, August 4th, 1833;
with a hymn composed for the occasion.

By the Revd. Gilbert L. Wiggins.

1 - 12 2

To my Dear Friends,

THE PARISHIONERS OF

WESTFIELD AND GREENWICH

It was my intention that this Sermon should have been printed previously to taking my departure from St. John but finding that the printer required a much longer time than had supposed necessary; and being desirous of setting off before it could have been accomplished, I concluded to defer its publication till I should arrive at this place.

In committing to the press the following pages, though at your particular request, I am only doing what my own feelings of inclination had suggested. I have been desirous leaving with you some visible token of pastoral affection and remembrance; and perhaps none could be more suitable than a discourse delivered under circumstances, and on a subject, calculated to awaken such solemn and affecting recollections.

With many prayers, I commend it to the blessing of the Holy Spirit; and beg that you will permit this little messenger, in the name of one who can no longer personally address you, to bring to remembrance the truths I endeavored to teach "when I was yet with you."

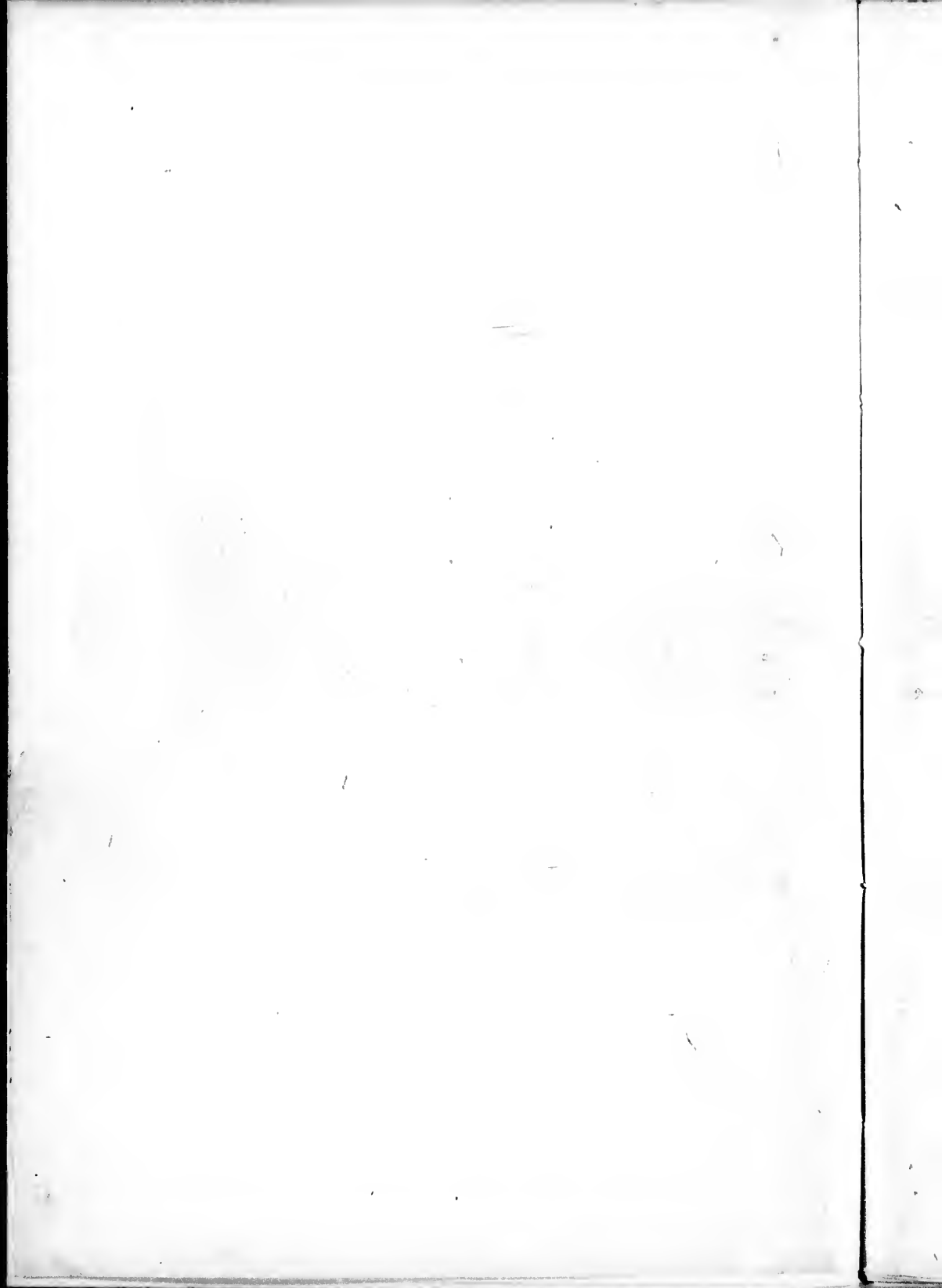
Always, with unchanging affection,

Your true friend,

G. L. W.

Boston, (Ms.) 7th Sept. 1833.

Went to Portland 21st Sept. 1833
lost Sermon from Church Dec 2 1836



S E R M O N .

ACTS XX. 25.

AND NOW, BEHOLD, I KNOW THAT YE ALL, AMONG WHOM I HAVE GONE PREACHING THE KINGDOM OF GOD, SHALL SEE MY FACE NO MORE.

THE relation between the spiritual shepherd and the flock of his care, is one the most solemn; and, when the obligations of it are reciprocally felt and appreciated, the most endearing. The trial, therefore, to the affectionate minister, when called upon to dissolve this relationship, can only be fully understood by one standing in the situation of the friend who is now, for the last time, addressing you.

You, my dear brethren, are not ignorant of *the circumstances which have led to this trying event*. You are aware, that the extensive and important parish of Greenwich, * being without a clergyman themselves, have looked entirely to the minister of this parish for the administration of the divine ordinances. You, with kind solicitude, have marked my declining health. You have contemplated it, not without feelings of deep concern, in whatever point of view it has been regarded; and while deploring the

* It will be perceived that the *introductory* part of this discourse here stands as it was addressed to the congregation at *Westfield*. In delivering it the preceding Sunday at Greenwich, the author had of course, in this particular, adapted it to the circumstances of that parish.

unhappy consequences to the people of Greenwich and to yourselves, have evinced toward your minister those affectionate and consoling sympathies, of which he can never cease to cherish a grateful remembrance.

Viewing, as I continually must, the spiritual wants even of *this* parish, especially in the more secluded districts, and under an unhappy consciousness that the state of my health rendered it impossible to supply those wants in any degree as I could desire — this alone has been sufficiently painful : but when, moreover, I have thought of Greenwich, when I have looked at its inhabitants, *now* left 'as sheep without a shepherd,' asking for the bread of life — supplicating 'Come over and help us,' without being able to extend to them the assistance that they need — my feelings have been such as are known only to Him 'who seeth in secret.'*

* Should these simple pages be read beyond the humble circle for which they are particularly designed ; and especially by any unacquainted with the peculiar circumstances of the *Established Church in the Colonies*, an explanatory remark or two may here perhaps be requisite —

All the parochial Clergy of this Church, in the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, are missionaries of the *Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts* ; and, except in towns, are supported almost exclusively by the bounty of that beneficent institution. There are indeed instances, even in the country parishes, where the missionary, beside the liberal salary afforded by the Society, receives a stipend from the people ; but this, in the writer's opinion, does not *generally* obtain, at least to any considerable amount, beyond the mere providing of a residence. Cases in fact might be mentioned, and that too, in districts far from being the most indigent, in which even *this* provision is not made, nor anything whatever contributed for their pastor — possibly because they may never have considered themselves called upon to make such effort. At the same time, it is equally true — and we trust that the fact will never cease to awaken the concern, to touch the sympathies, and to call forth the beneficence of British Christians, in behalf of multitudes who are perishing for lack of knowledge in the dark places of these provinces — that there are many parts of this country, in which wide fields for usefulness present themselves, where the ministrations of our Church would scarcely be known, if the Clergy were not supported entirely, or almost entirely, by foreign bounty, and where, by the never-to-be-forgotten exertions of the Society P. G. F., her ministering servants have, through the blessing of the Most High, planted the standard of the Cross in the waste places of the wilderness, and opened in the desert a highway for our God.

It is true, that either of these parishes presents, in itself, a field more than sufficient for all the zeal and effort of the most devoted minister of Christ, however vigorous his constitution. But since the Society cannot afford a missionary for Greenwich, it seemed unavoidable, while I should retain my situation here, that that particular parish must remain without the privilege of a Gospel ministry.

Accordingly, it has been my earnest prayer, that He, "from whom all good counsels proceed," would be pleased to point out my own path of duty under the peculiarly trying circumstances in which I have been placed. I have considered the destitute state of that congregation — the pressing wants of the many immortal souls scattered over a wide-spread population; and, after giving the subject all the investigation in my power, have come

But however these things may be — as the attempt to support a clergyman of the established Church by the people themselves, in conjunction with us, never yet actually been made, and as the Society's means do not admit of increasing the number of their missionary stations — many populous parishes are, in consequence, left without ministers. Such parishes are therefore dependant upon the missionary in their nearest vicinity, and are thus, in a manner, considered a part of his charge. (Although it must of course be obvious, that, except when he officiates on week days, they can receive the benefit of his services only in proportion as the sphere for his more immediate labors is neglected.) This was the case with Greenwich, adjoining Westfield. Indeed, for a number of years after the writer entered upon his late charge, several remote, though flourishing, settlements, in an extensive circumjacent parish beyond Greenwich — then without a resident minister — were in a condition almost equally destitute. Those settlements, while the state of his health allowed, he occasionally visited; officiating, in such cases, uniformly on week days. Nor can he now, without feelings of touching interest, indulge the recollection of those days that are gone, on which the people would leave their occupations, frequently at the most busy seasons of the year, and flock in such numbers from the surrounding country, to welcome with glad hearts the messenger of salvation. In scenes like those, have been performed some of the most affecting exercises of his ministry; and it was not without many painful struggles of feeling, that the urgent solicitations from that affectionate people were successively resisted, and the writer's visits to that interesting portion of the Lord's vineyard ultimately discontinued. But of late years, his Sunday duties at Greenwich alone, and occasional visits through the week to the distant parts of that parish, added to the immediate claims of the one under his more particular care — have been too much for his constitution,

to the deliberate and solemn conclusion of resigning my present charge, and of thus removing, as far as I may be concerned, every impediment to the supplying of this station with a more competent missionary : and, as no other situation is afforded me in this Diocese, under the constraining convictions of religious duty, I have resorted to the only remaining alternative, and resigned my office as a missionary of the Society.

In having done this, I am indeed left without any definite prospect of support for my family ; but, to my own conviction, it is the only line of conduct which, as a consistent servant of the Redeemer, I could adopt. To the care of that gracious Being, who has taught us to repose on him for the supply of our temporal wants, I commend myself with those whom he has given me ; and, in the consoling consciousness of having sought to know

especially during the winter season — long and frequent exposures to its cold and inclemency being more than his enfeebled health could now sustain ; inasmuch, that during the past winter he did not attempt visiting Greenwich at all, and subsequently gave it up altogether. It was an affecting regard to the consequent condition of that parish, which induced him to the step he has so recently taken, trying beyond measure as it has been to resign his office as a missionary of that venerable Society, in whose service he has had the honor of being engaged for about thirteen years.

Let it not hence be inferred, that the Society require or expect from their missionaries, efforts which may not be made consistently with their state of health, or other inevitable circumstances. This is by no means the case ; nor is the salary which they receive affected by the extent or limits of their missionary operations. Nay, had his health continued to decline so far as to render the discharge of his duties even more irregular and partial than they have been for the several years last past, the writer is persuaded that his salary would never have been in any degree diminished, in consequence thereof, by that venerable and benevolent body who watch with such kind and parental care over the missionaries employed in their service.

Still, when the conscientious labourer in the vineyard of Christ, looks round upon an extensive and desolate portion of this vineyard, dependant, as it were, upon his efforts ; and while he feels himself unequal to its successful cultivation, has reason to suppose that some one, fitted by strength of constitution for more vigorous exertion, would be likely to succeed to his place — it becomes, with him, a grave and momentous question, whether, under such circumstances, he be not called upon by the indications of Divine Providence, to relinquish for another, a post, to the duties of which he is no longer adequate, and to seek for himself what might seem a more suitable situation in the Church of God.

and do his will, humbly trust, that, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, I shall feel calmly resigned to his dispensations concerning me whatever they may be.

It has been my endeavour, to *re-examine* the motives which first induced me to enter the sanctuary, and to serve at the altar of Christ. Those vows of God which are upon me, I have *cordially renewed*—have, through his grace, solemnly devoted myself anew to the Saviour's service, as a minister of his Gospel, praying that he would direct my steps, and guide me to that portion of the great vineyard, which he may have marked out for the scene of my future labours.

And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. At least, ye shall see my face no more in the relation I have hitherto borne to you; and, in all human probability, we shall never meet again on this side eternity.

Although the words of the text were used by the great Apostle of the Gentiles, and that, too, upon an occasion peculiarly solemn and distinguished; still, I trust that they may be consistently accommodated to our present purpose, adapted as they are to excite reflections so very appropriate. The most unworthy minister of Christ, is appointed to preach "the kingdom of God;" and, in taking leave of that flock with the oversight of which he has for many years been charged, it will be his desire to exhort them to review with him the period in which he may have gone in and out among them.

In discoursing from the text, I shall, in the first place, briefly explain the meaning of the phrase, "*The kingdom of God*;" secondly, show what it is to "*preach*" the kingdom of God; and, thirdly, endeavor to make such *application* of the subject as the present occasion may seem to suggest.

I. First, then, I am to explain the meaning of the phrase—*The kingdom of God*.

1. This expression is sometimes used, to signify *the blessings of the Gospel dispensation in general*. Thus, our Saviour says to the Jews—"The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." Again—"I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also."

2. But *more particularly*—it is called the “kingdom of God,” because it is a *spiritual* kingdom—set up in the hearts of believers on earth, and receiving its consummation in the kingdom of heavenly glory.

1. It is *set up in the hearts of believers on earth*. The Lord Jesus, then, has a kingdom here; not such a one as the Jews expected the Messiah to establish—a kingdom of earthly glory and dominion. No: with reference to this, he has himself declared, that his “kingdom *is not of this world*.” It is opposed to all its pomp and pride; and pours contempt on all its imaginary greatness. It “*cometh not with observation*”—that is, does not present itself to our senses surrounded with any visible splendour. It has its seat in the heart of God’s children, by which he dwells in them and walks in them—by which he is their God, and they his people; by which they are “delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son”—a kingdom of “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

2. This kingdom, further, is intended to prepare the subjects of it for *the kingdom of everlasting glory in heaven*. Heaven could not be a place of happiness, if the soul were not prepared to relish its pure enjoyments. It is in the present state of trial and probation, that the followers of their Redeemer are “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” Christ tells them, “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” This is not, and cannot be, a state of repose; but a scene of continued conflict. Christians have enemies, numerous and powerful, to encounter, as they pursue their journey heavenward. But they have placed themselves under the guidance of Jesus. He is “the captain of their salvation.” He has himself been made “perfect through sufferings.” His people, also, shall be “more than conquerors through him that loved them.” It is their privilege to say with the Apostle, “The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom.” Christ gives them power from on high, to triumph over all their enemies. He leads them to victory. He cheers them with the animating promise—“To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

Thus, the kingdom of God is that *spiritual kingdom*, set up in the hearts of his people on earth, by which, *here*, they are “re-

deemed out of the house of servants" — "redeemed from all iniquity;" and, *hereafter*, shall be made "kings and priests unto God," and reign with him for ever and ever."

II. Hence, *preaching* "the kingdom of God," or, as it is called in other passages of the New Testament, "the Gospel of the kingdom," includes *the whole of that message with which the ministers of Christ are charged, and which they are solemnly bound to deliver to the souls committed to their care.*

1. They are *soldiers*. They lead the hosts of the spiritual Israel. Accordingly, St. Paul exhorts Timothy to "war a good warfare," and to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." They are sent to contend with "the god of this world" — the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the "children of disobedience." Nay, they have to encounter the confederated hosts of earth and hell. With these great enemies to the cause of God, they are commissioned and commanded to maintain an uncompromising war. They come not, however, in their own name; but in his name, and by his authority, before whom the nations of the earth "are as the small dust of the balance" — who is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Moreover; "the weapons of their warfare are not carnal" — not such as human wisdom or carnal policy would suggest — "but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds." Thus prepared — they come to destroy the power of Satan, and to advance the triumphs of the Redeemer's kingdom. They are sent forth, to rescue from the cruel grasp of that prince of darkness, the degraded victims of pollution and misery; that they may present them the trophies of his grace, who "shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied" — "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified." This suggests *another* office which they sustain —

2. They are *ambassadors*. "We then as ambassadors for Christ, beseech you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." They are authorized to offer a free and full pardon to all who are willing to lay down the weapons of rebellion. They are to exhort those who are far from God by wicked works, to seek his mercy while it may be found, that their sins may be washed out in the blood

of Jesus — warning them, at the same time, what must be the consequences of rejecting these gracious invitations. In a word — in imitation of their heavenly Master, who “came to seek and to save that which was lost,” they are to search for wandering and perishing sinners, that they may be brought to Christ, and made partakers of his salvation.

3. But this is not all. They are, also, *shepherds*. The great Shepherd solemnly charges them — “Feed my lambs” — “Feed my sheep;” and his inspired Apostle — “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.” Not only, then, are they to labour for the *conversion* of souls; but to accompany them, *as they pursue their christian pilgrimage*. Not ignorant themselves of Satan’s devices — they are to apprize them of the stratagems of this great spiritual enemy, and warn them lest he get an advantage over them. They are to comfort them in sorrow — to assist them in difficulties — to seek them when they wander — to commend them to the care of Him “that is able to keep them from falling.”

Such, then, are some of the solemn duties of those who are not to preach the kingdom of God — to deliver the slaves of sin, a bondage worse than Egyptian; and to lead them, through this ‘great and terrible wilderness,’ to the land of spiritual promise — keeping the eye of faith on that great Being, who is “the pillar of fire” to direct their course, till they reach a better country, even an heavenly, and, with those whom it has been their distinguished privilege to feed and to guide, join the ransomed multitude before the “throne of God and the Lamb.” — “And who is sufficient for these things?”

We might indeed, at first view, be inclined to believe, that none but an angel of God — one of those “ministering spirits” who “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word” — that none other could be qualified for conveying his message of salvation to a sinful world. But here, the Almighty, with the compassion of a father, comes down to our infirmities; and manifests his goodness, while he displays his wisdom. If the great “High Priest of our profession,” Jesus Christ, “was in all points tempted like as we are,” that he might be touched with a feeling of our infirmities — are we not, my dear brethren, con-

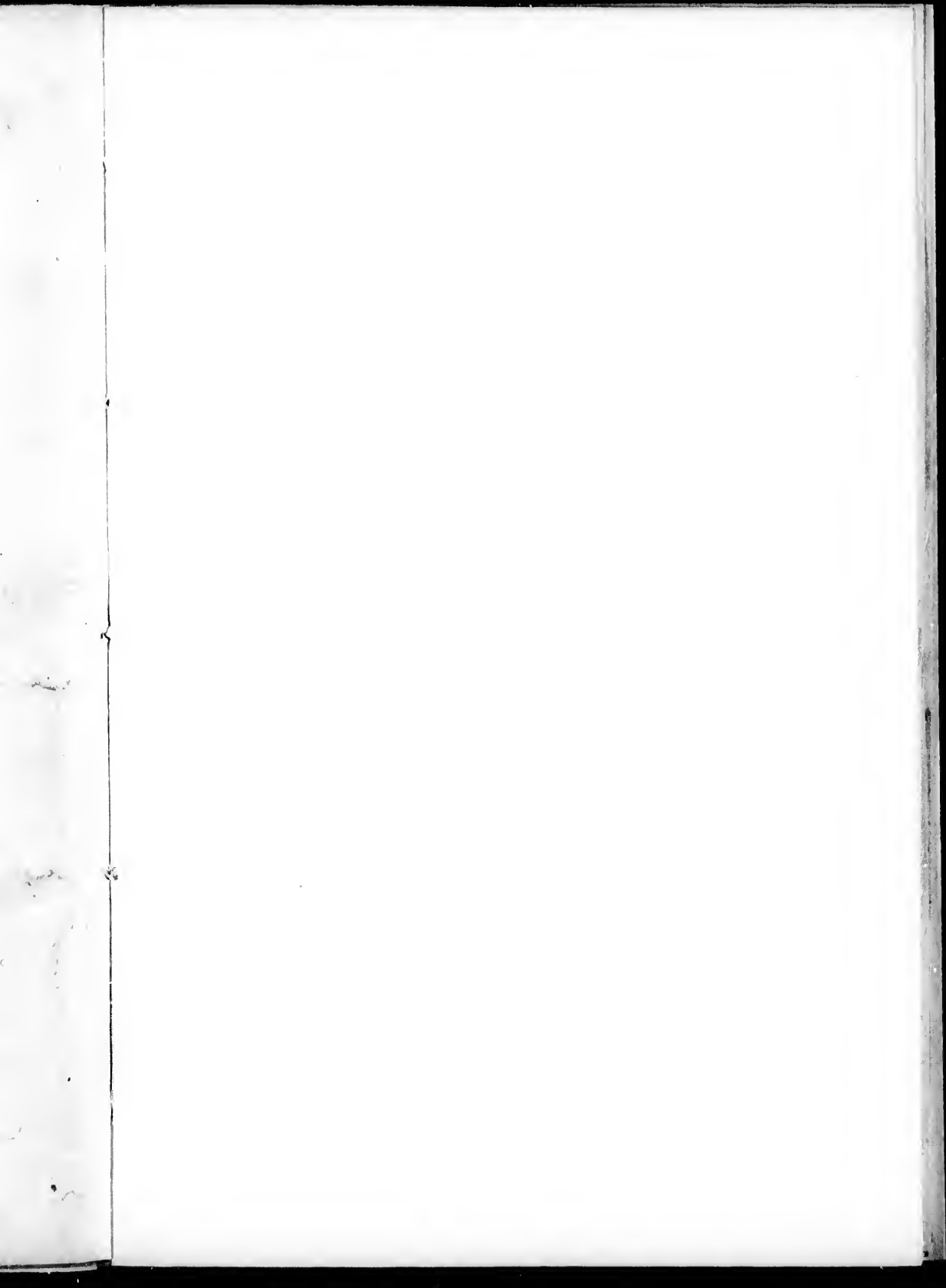
strained to acknowledge the loving kindness of God, in ordaining, that the minister of his Son's Gospel, should be taken from among that same fallen race to whom he is commissioned to preach? — that he should be one who has himself felt the load of sin and guilt, in order that he may sympathize with the penitent sinner, and lead him to that Saviour in whom he has found rest? — “one who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.”

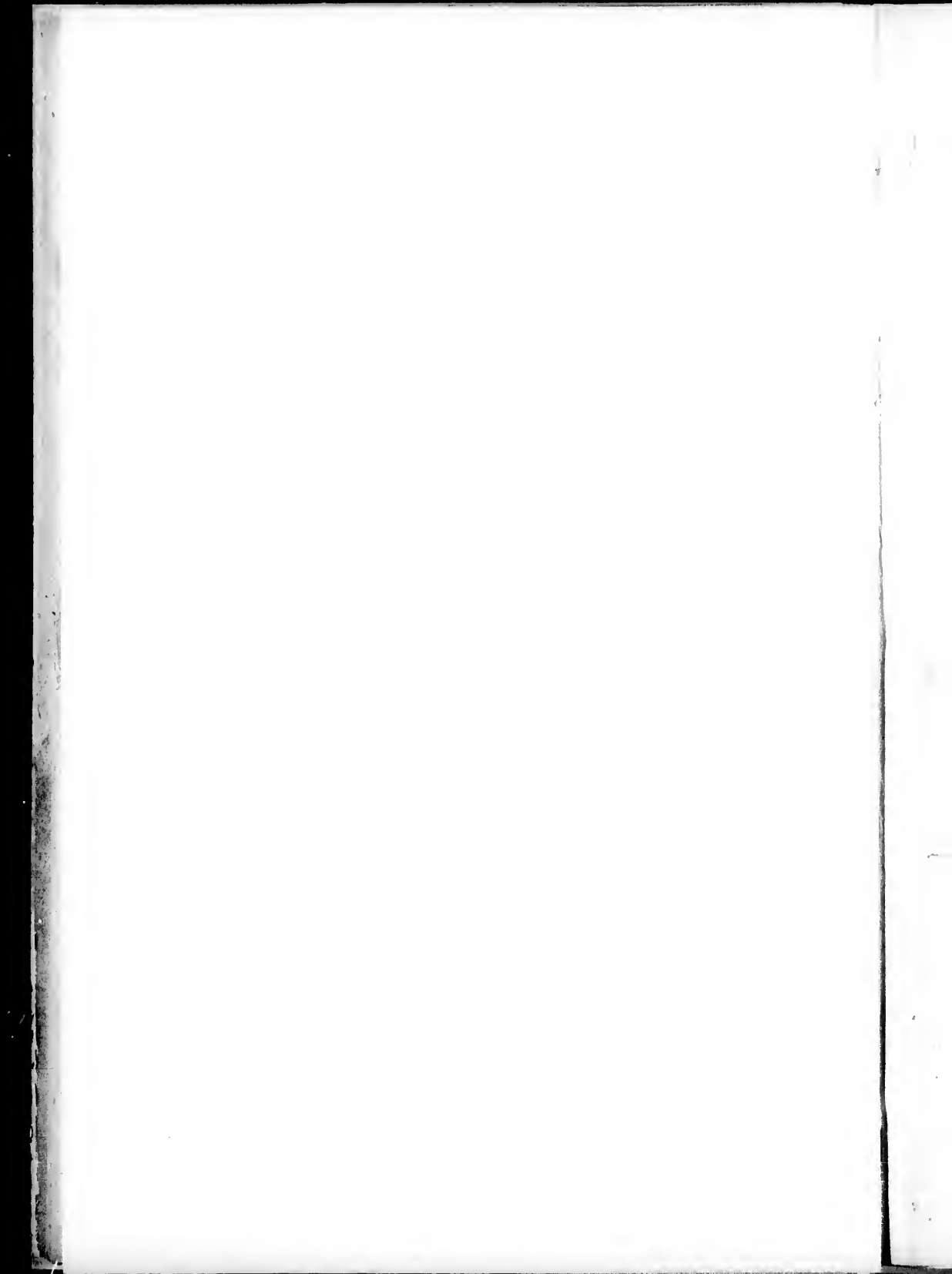
In selecting such instruments, moreover, the Most High probably intends to teach us, that the success of their efforts is owing entirely to a *divine influence* — that the work of salvation, from beginning to end, is his work “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness.” “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” The ministers of Jesus Christ feel, or ought to feel, that they are “not sufficient, of themselves, to think any thing as of themselves.” Their “sufficiency is of God.” He, and He only can make them “able ministers of the New Testament.” The consideration of these affecting truths should awaken the sympathies, and excite the fervent prayers, of God's people, in behalf of those who are charged with an office so momentous and responsible. In themselves, weak and helpless — they have no strength except what they derive from that great Shepherd, by whom the most feeble of the flock is sustained. Having been “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” and being still polluted with the remains of sin, they have no source of comfort or confidence, but in looking to “the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world” — that same compassionate friend of sinners, to whom they would direct every penitent transgressor for pardon and peace. Should it be their unhappiness to have little visible fruit of their labours — to seem to address themselves to eyes that will not see, and ears that will not hear, and hearts that will not understand — while they pray for those who receive not their message, they must leave events with Him who has said, that his word shall not return unto him void; and, with whatever success their efforts should appear to be crowned — they, the unworthy, though honored, *instruments*, must prostrate themselves in the dust, and say — “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, give the praise.”

III. Having thus briefly explained the meaning of the expression, "The kingdom of God," and, hence, endeavoured to show what is meant by "preaching" the kingdom of God — I proceed, in the last place, *to make such application of this subject, as may seem suggested by the solemn occasion upon which we are this day assembled.*

It would not become me, brethren, confidently to say with the Apostle, in the words connected with the text — "I am pure from the blood of all men." More appropriate, perhaps, would be his language upon another occasion — "I have been with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." But though I would not say, that "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God;" or, that I have fully obeyed the solemn charge addressed to Timothy, and applicable to every minister of the Gospel, "Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering and doctrine" — yet this much I humbly hope I may venture to affirm, — that, wherein I have failed, it has not been through want of a sincere intention to "make full proof of my ministry," by testifying to you "the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." My "prayer" for you has been, that "you might be saved;" and it has been my desire to be instrumental in promoting your salvation. This desire, I confess, has not always been equally fervent; nor perhaps, at any time, of that constraining degree which the ministers of Christ ought continually to feel. Not only, has the discharge of my duties, in late years, been greatly interrupted by ill health; but, throughout the whole course of my ministry among you, I feel conscious that those duties have been very imperfectly performed, and I pray God that my own deficiencies may not be permitted to operate as a hinderance to any of your souls. I beg also, herein, my dear brethren an interest in the prayers of those among you who frequent the throne of grace.

Still, "I take you to record," that, however feebly and imperfectly, I have preached to you from this pulpit, the "everlasting Gospel" of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and, in some degree, as far as the circumstances of such a widely-scattered population would admit, have exhorted you "from house to house," beseeching you to attend to "the things which belong to your peace," before they should be for ever "hid from your eyes," as your own consciences must this day testify.





I have sought to *explain and enforce the leading doctrines and precepts of the Bible*. I have aimed to bring you to that knowledge of yourselves, which alone can lead to the knowledge of God and to that spiritual acquaintance with him, which is the only source of true happiness. This has led me to invite you to the contemplation of his glorious attributes, as far as we may comprehend them; and, thus, to convince you of the necessity of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." You have been taught, that of such holiness *all* are by nature destitute — that "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" and that, therefore, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The nature and evidences of this change have been set before you. You have been warned of the danger of *pharisaical presumption* on the one hand, and of *antinomian delusion* on the other; that is, you have been taught, that a correct outward deportment, or, in the common meaning of the phrase, *a moral life* can never supply the place, or preclude the necessity, of that entire conversion of the heart unto God, without which, the comparatively virtuous, as well as the completely virtuous, are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" — "dead in trespasses and sins;" — and, on the contrary, that all pretensions to the change, unaccompanied with an entire conversion of the heart unto God, spirituality of affections, and holiness of life — are vain and delusive. In few words — religion has been represented to you, as having its seat in the heart — as possessing a power and reality, which, in order to be understood, must be felt and experienced; while those who are brought under its transforming influence, have been described — as separated from a world that "lieth in wickedness," "sanctified in Christ Jesus," as having become "partakers of the divine nature," made "a peculiar people zealous of good works," showing forth "the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light." You have been taught, that all, who remain destitute of these evidences, stop short of true religion; that, whatever may be their character in other respects, they are not disciples of Jesus, and, consequently, have no scriptural ground for hoping that they "shall escape the damnation of hell."

The more particular duties of the Christian life — devotional and practical — have not been forgotten. Believers have been

exhorted, as their duty and privilege, to "grow in grace"—to seek for increasingly higher attainments in the divine life—to adopt for their motto the language of the Apostle, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The blessings thus imperfectly described, have been set before you as the purchase of a *dying Saviour's love*, and the fruit of that *Holy Spirit's influence* which takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the soul. They have been held forth as offered to all who are willing to receive them. Guilty, and lost, and ruined sinners, have been invited to come and partake them; and you have been told, that none are excluded, but those who wilfully exclude themselves.

The time, brethren, does not permit me to extend this scanty outline, for, thus far, I have already occupied more space than I intended, and have yet many things to say. Your own memories and convictions must therefore supply the deficiency. "*Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh, I have preached the Gospel unto you;*" and my prayer is, that what has thus been shown in much weakness, may be raised in power, to the glory of God and the salvation of many of your souls!

Over some of you, I trust I may be permitted to rejoice, as the seals of my ministry. This, amidst much that causes painful concern, is truly an alleviating source of consolation. Delightful thought!—to have been made instrumental in saving only *one soul from everlasting burnings*, in bringing one wandering prodigal to the knowledge of God, and a *reparation for the joys of heaven*—this, this alone, were a reward— a rich reward, for years of anxiety and toil.

The providence of God is now calling me away. For all the kindness I have experienced during my residence among you, and for every particular instance of it, accept the expression of my grateful feelings. I need not assure you, that my prayers shall be offered to the Author of every good and perfect gift, that his goodness and mercy may follow you all the days of your life. Especially, may he give you the best of all blessings— a faithful minister of his Son's Gospel— a pastor after his own heart— one who will rejoice to heal that which is diseased, to bring again

that which is lost, to bind up that which is broken — one, whose labours may be more zealous, and far more successful, than mine have ever been! And while I pray that you may have such a shepherd and such a friend, I earnestly desire to be remembered also in your prayers. Remember, ye who draw near to God — remember one, who, in much infirmity, has so long sought your good. Pray that the divine presence may go with me — that I may have grace to realize the value of souls, and to labour for their salvation — that I may faithfully feed that flock over which the Holy Ghost may make me overseer, and at last, through the rich mercy of God our Saviour, “finish my course with joy.”

Since, then, this is the last opportunity of meeting together within these walls, which the present pastor and his flock shall never be permitted to enjoy — since we shall probably meet no more, till waked by the trump of God, “Arise ye dead and come to judgment,” — allow me, I entreat you, to descend into your hearts. Give me your serious and impartial attention, while I endeavour to assist you in examining what improvement has been made of the means of grace and salvation that have been afforded you; during the period in which we have walked together to this house of God. And let us lift our earnest prayers, that the special blessings of the Holy Spirit may be shed forth upon this congregation, that something more than merely natural sensibilities may be awakened — that those of us who have tasted the grace of Jesus, may be excited to greater devotedness in his service! and that hearts which have hitherto never relented, may feel, this day, the softenings of contrition!

1. In the first place, I shall address myself to those among you *who have scriptural grounds for believing that you have cordially received the message of salvation.*

And here I would not discourage the *weak* disciples of him who has said, “*Feed my lambs.*” Ye well know that I have fed such of you “with milk and not with meat.” I have endeavoured to calm your fears, to remove your doubts, to teach you the kindness and compassion of Jesus. I have sympathized with you in seasons of trial; and now I commend you to him who feels for you what his under shepherds can never feel — who himself carries “the lambs in his arms and bears them on his bosom.” Open continually your heart to him. Tell him all your sins. Make known to him all your wants, temptations, and sorrows. When ready to sink under the consciousness of your own unwor-

thiness, think of his mercy and love. He shed for you his atoning blood. He died for you on the cross of Calvary. He now intercedes for you before his Father, and your Father — his God, and your God. He sees you from his throne in the heavens, and says to you — “ Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth and was dead ; and behold I am alive for evermore.” Look, then, to him in persevering prayer ; and regard not the suggestions of Satan, when he would tempt you to fear that you are cast out from his sight. “ Ask and receive, that your joy may be full.”

But while endeavouring to comfort and encourage the weak in faith ; let me, at the same time, exhort all who suppose themselves to belong to Christ, to search and see whether they be verily and in truth his disciples. “ Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith : prove your own selves.” Rest not without clear and satisfactory evidences, that you really belong to that “ little flock,” to whom it is the “ Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom.”

If, brethren, ye be Christians indeed, how distinguished and exalted is your character ! you have turned your backs on a wicked world ; and have set your faces toward Zion, the city of the living God. You have a hope which you would not exchange for empires. Having then begun well in the ways of God, show “ all diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end : that ye be not slothful ; but followers of them, who through faith and patience, inherit the promises.”

The limits of this discourse will not allow me to be very minute ; but some particular dangers that may beset you, I would briefly point out ; and say a few words to animate you in your Christian course —

1. First — beware of *false pretenders to religion*. If you meet with persons who make high pretensions to experience in the things of God, whose prevailing habits, notwithstanding, are not agreeable to the precepts of the Gospel, however fluently or plausible they may speak on religious subjects, — regard them not. Remember the words of Christ, “ By their fruits ye shall know them.”

2. Again : suspect those who *love to cherish a party spirit*. When such as profess to be Christians, seem mainly anxious to range themselves under the banners of a party, contending, ear-

nestly perhaps, for this or that point of doctrine, whether important or not — while they are indifferent and cold with regard to cultivating in themselves, or promoting in the hearts and lives of others, the “fruits of holiness,” destitute of humility and the love of Christ — “from such turn away.”

These several classes of characters have proved to many a stumbling-block. Be not ye, however, disturbed or perplexed on account of such things; for there have *always* been those who “profess to know God, but who in works deny him;” and there may be the zeal of Jehu, while the “heart is not right with God.” “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”

3. A third source of danger, the greater because less likely to be suspected, is this — *judging of your own spiritual state by comparing yourselves with those whom you regard as established Christians*. This danger is particularly great in the present day. There is too much deference given to the *supposed experience*, and *actual practice*, of eminent professors; and too little to the unerring standard — *the word of God*.

For instance: — ‘Such a christian brother says, that his mind is dark, that his affections are earthly, that he has little relish for prayer or communion with God. Need I then, who am by no means so far advanced in the divine life — need I wonder that it should be so with me?’ Now, the apostle speaks of some in his day, who thus compared “themselves amongst themselves.” But does he approve their conduct? No: — he says of them, that “they are not wise.”

Take *another* instance: ‘Such a one mingles a good deal in the society of worldly persons, nor do his life and conversation seem to give offence: nay, he occasionally joins in their vain recreations. Or, he is fond of gain, and sometimes shows a disposition to take advantage of the ignorance or necessity of those with whom he has dealings — does unto others, what he would *not* have others do unto him. Or, he sadly deviates from simplicity and sincerity in his conversation. Or, he is of an unkind and even resentful or implacable disposition. And still he seems to be a pious man!’ But is this the testimony of God concerning him? Hear the declarations of his own word with regard to such things — “Come out from among them and be ye separate, and

touch not the unclean thing" — "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" — "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" — "Speak ye every man truth with his neighbour" — "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Brethren! "These are spots in your feasts of charity."

I cannot enlarge. These brief hints may perhaps assist in illustrating my meaning. My dear brethren! watch ye against snares so insidious, or ye may become entangled and hindered. Judge as charitably as ye *consistently* can of the character of others. But for yourselves, follow *none*, except so far as they follow Christ — no matter what their professions; what their seeming piety in many respects; or their religious state, in the estimation of Christians in general. While, therefore, you cherish an "unfeigned love of the brethren," while you "love one another with a pure heart fervently" — lean only upon God. Expect not here to find models for your imitation; but look to your great exemplar — Jesus Christ, and seek "to walk even as he also walked."

4. But the *greatest* danger is from within — *from your own deceitful hearts*. To this point direct your chief attention. Remembering continually your own weakness, and that you are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" — walk humbly with him. Call yourselves frequently to an account, praying to him to search you. Seek to ascertain whether you be growing in grace; for if not advancing, you are declining. Let not a day pass without solemn self-examination, taking the word of God continually for your guide — for "a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your paths." Much will be gained by this practice. It will, through the divine blessing, lead you to know more of yourselves; and to discover, as you penetrate the dark and winding recesses within, that there — there — lie the great enemies of your peace. Your consciences will thus be more enlightened and tender. You will feel more of your own vileness, and Christ will become more exceedingly precious. You will see more of the hatefulness of sin, and the beauty of holiness; and will increasingly long to have "the mind that was in Christ Jesus." The duties of the closet will become more delightful; and the spirit which you there imbibe in your intercourse with Jehovah, will be manifested in your life and conversation among your

fellow creatures. You will thus be enabled to rise sweetly above corrupt and sinful passions, and to breathe an atmosphere that refreshes while it purifies. True, the world will hate, revile, and oppose you. Still, in their hearts, they shall be compelled to acknowledge, that there is a reality in religion; and while you show to those about you, that ye are "the children of your Father which is in heaven," they will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus. Follow on thus "to know the Lord," and O, what peace — what joy — what heavenly-mindedness you shall attain! — a foretaste and earnest of the joys of heaven! Such, my christian brethren, shall you find to be some of the blessed fruits of walking with God, looking to his word for the *only* standard of truth and holiness, and leading a life of watchfulness and prayer.

For the encouragement, however, of all who are engaged in this warfare, I would add — *Be not discouraged, though ye meet with difficulties.* Difficulties ye must expect, but fear them not. "The Canaanite is still in the land" — The world, the flesh, and the devil oppose *every* step of your progress. Corruptions from within and temptations from without, will, through the power of your spiritual enemy, bend their united efforts to draw you aside from God — to induce worldly-mindedness, neglect of prayer, and of other secret duties; and *in proportion as you yield to their influence*, you shall be exposed to "the fiery darts of the devil." There is, it is true, a heavenly Physician, who can heal every wound those darts may inflict; and who, if you apply to him, "will heal your backslidings, and love you freely." Should you, therefore, be thus unhappily prevailed upon to turn away from that gracious and omnipotent Being whose power alone can sustain you — return at once, and humble yourselves in contrition before him. But sink not with despondency, though your adversaries may seem to triumph. Rather adopt the language of the prophet — "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him —". Rise again to the contest, made wiser, through grace, by past experience. Look unto Jesus, the author and *finisher* of your faith. Renew your covenant with him, and he will say — "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." Recollect for your comfort, that others have gone

before you through the same difficulties. "They overcame through the blood of the Lamb" — and so shall you. They have entered into their Master's joy. "Be faithful unto death," and ye also shall receive "a crown of life."

Lastly : in addition to the diligent use of all those other means tending to invigorate your graces, and to animate you in pursuing the path that lies before you, — avail yourselves of every opportunity of *commemorating the dying love of Jesus*, in that holy sacrament of which, to-day, we are to partake together for the last time. Do this in remembrance of him who has done so much for you; and let this memorial of his infinite compassion and boundless grace, constrain you to live more devotedly to him, and unite you one to another by the most endearing ties of Christian affection. May the Lamb that was slain to redeem us to God by his blood, be with us, upon the present occasion, to bless us! — to *comfort, strengthen, stablish* us! May the trials of our present separation, lead us to think much of that family, whose happy members, however scattered abroad in this house of their pilgrimage, shall meet in their Father's house above, to part no more — to drink new wine with their Redeemer in the kingdom of God! "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

2. But I have a duty yet to perform, more painful than language can express — to take a final leave of those in this congregation, *who, for so many years have heard the Gospel, and, to the present hour, have never embraced its offers of mercy.* And O, my heart sinks as the fearful apprehension comes over me — that a vast proportion of the numerous assembly before me, who now fill this holy place, are included in this unhappy description. For you — my feelings of deepest concern are awakened; and impressed with a sense of the solemnities of this day, I desire faithfully and affectionately to give you my parting counsels. In order that these, through the divine blessing, may apply themselves as closely as possible, I shall address you according to the several classes of which you may be supposed to consist; and I charge you, before God, to remember the account that you must give.

1. There are some, it is to be feared, who, so far from receiving the message which has been delivered in the name of

There are some who do not
believe in the Gospel

Jesus have opposed the doctrines of his Gospel, and thrown hinderances in the way of my ministry.

It is my grief to think that any of you should act a part so awful in its consequences. Consider, I entreat you, what you have been doing. In opposing his ministers, it is *God*, and not man, with whom you contend. It is not our own cause that we defend, but his who has said to the preachers of his Gospel — “He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me;” and who has declared, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for those who receive not the messengers whom he sends. Alas! is not the unhappy secret this — *that you love your delusions, and therefore are unwilling to be disturbed in them?* Have you not regarded me as your enemy, because I have told you the truth? Has not the language of your hearts been like that of Ahab respecting Micah — ‘As for this man, “I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil”’? Well — now I am about to leave you. “Ye shall see my face no more.” No more shall my counsels and exhortations offend you. Remember, however, that I have delivered a message from God. I have told you before, and now repeat the solemn warning — In vain shall you seek for any road to heaven, but the “narrow way” which Christ has marked out. Every other leads to hell. “If thou return at all in peace” — if you find peace here or happiness hereafter in the path you are pursuing — “then the Lord hath not spoken by me.”* O, that my last words might penetrate your conscience, and awaken you to a discovery of your delusions. Pause, and examine yourselves, I affectionately beseech you. Tremble, while you think of the possibility of being mistaken, on a subject which involves the eternal destinies of the soul. Contemplate the conduct of those “noble” Bereans whose example is recorded for your imitation. Like them, search the Scriptures. Search them diligently — search them “daily.” Bring our doctrines to that *infallible* touchstone. Implore the grace of the Holy Spirit, to give you humble and teachable minds; and, like those Bereans, you shall be taught of God — like them, you shall have your understandings opened to understand those scriptures which you now pervert, and which alone can make you “wise unto salvation.”

* See 1 Kings xxii. 28.

2. There are others, *who have "cared for none of these things."*

You may not positively have *opposed* your minister; but you have *disregarded his instructions*. You have either imagined yourselves "whole," and to "have no need of the physician;" or you have professed an assent (but it has been a cold unmeaning assent) to the preacher's words. His instructions and exhortations have been "like water spilt upon the ground;" or, rather, like the seed which "fell by the way side." The Gospel of God has been preached — the threatenings of the Almighty have sounded in your ears: you have been told of his mercy and grace, and intreated to seek him while he may be found. Sabbath after sabbath, and year after year — you have heard these things. But they have been heard, only to be forgotten. The enemy of souls has taken away the word sown in your hearts, and left you prayerless and careless still. The business or the pleasures of life have occupied your thoughts or engaged your affections; and God, the soul, and eternity — have been lightly regarded. But think you, that you shall have no account to give of the counsels and warnings you have received? Think you, because *you* have forgotten them, that they are therefore forgotten in heaven — that because you remember them not, they are remembered *by God*? Ah! be assured they are written in the book of his everlasting remembrance; and unless you awake from the slumbers of sin and seek redemption through a Saviour's blood, the record will appear against you in the day of judgment. *Then* — memory will faithfully perform its office. *Then* — conscience will bring forward the catalogue of long-forgotten sins, and fasten upon you her agonizing stings of guilt and remorse. Listen, then, *now* to her voice. Be careless no longer. "Awake thou sleeper, and call upon thy God;" lest you awake at last to lament — "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved."

3. There is a *third* class, to whom your departing pastor must make his last appeal — *those who have put their hand to the plough and are looking back.*

There was a time when you seemed awakened to a sense of your sins, and earnestly desirous of fleeing "from the wrath to come." As the preacher reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come — you trembled. When he spoke of the blessedness of religion, the compassion of a dying Redeemer, the

now you know not the value? — for one of those precious Sabbaths, which you allowed to pass away in the cares of the world, or in the follies and pleasures and vanities of life? What would you then give for one more opportunity of attending the house of God, of seeking him in prayer, and hearing once more that long-neglected Gospel? But alas! your Sabbath and Sanctuary privileges shall then have come to an end, and this long-neglected Gospel will have ceased to sound its glad tidings in your ears. You shall then look beyond the impassable gulph, to the heaven that you have lost — and lost for ever. What! and must I indulge the dismal apprehension, that this shall indeed be the case with any of you, to whom your pastor is now making his last appeal — that that blessed Gospel which might be a savour of life unto life, shall thus prove a savour of death unto death? How can I leave you, — and leave you in your sins! How can I say “farewell” — if it must be an everlasting farewell! We have often met together here; have heard of hell and heaven; of him who came to burst the chains of sin, and set the captives free — we have often met together here, and shall we part — *to meet no more?* Distressing thought! Oh, could that in some instances; or even in some few instances — in some instance, my last exhortations should be as years of exhortation have not been, how would it comfort the heart of your departing pastor; and with what feelings of gratitude and joy, should we remember this day throughout Eternity!

Refuse me not, then, one last request. It is the *last* that I shall ever make; and I entreat you — I beseech you, refuse me not. Will you meet me to-day at that throne of grace, where my supplications shall be offered for you? and where the prayer of the repénting sinner shall never be presented in vain? Will you there surrender your hearts to God, and implore the grace of his Holy Spirit, to break the power of sin within you — to take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh — to plead the efficacy of that blood of Jesus which cleanseth from all sin? Say, will you meet me there, that we may meet at last in heaven?

H Y M N.

This house — this sacred house of prayer
 Together we have trod :
 Oft have the pastor and his flock
 Met in this house of God.

Here we have heard the Gospel's sound —
 The " new and living way :"
 The wandering sinner here hath learned
 To weep, repent, and pray.

The " worshippers of Jacob's God "
 Have tasted of his love —
 Here has the fainting pilgrim found
 The manna from above.

But still, within these walls — Alas !
 Seen by the omniscient eye,
 What souls, in vain have heard the call —
 ' Why, sinners ! will ye die ? '

We part — on earth to meet no more
 Ah, say ! shall it be given,
 To meet before Jehovah's throne —
 That glorious throne in heaven ?

Thine holy arm, O Lord ! make bare !
 Thy holy Spirit give !
 That sinners now thy voice may hear —
 May hear thy voice, and live !

' Yes, now we hear thine awful voice,
 And, trembling, seek thy face.
 To our poor souls, great God ! impart
 The riches of thy grace.

' Long — long have we relentless stood :
 In mercy thou dost spare —
 O, may our hearts, through grace, this day
 Begin a life of prayer ! '

