SERMONS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

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SERMON I.

SINNERS BOUND TO CHANGE THEIR OWN HEARTS.

-- Ezekiel xviii. 31.--
"Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will ye die?"

This lecture was typed in by Pastor Art Ferry, Jr.
and edited by Terry Deckard

These words were addressed to the house of Israel, who, from their history and from the verses in connexion with the text, were evidently in a state of impenitency; and the requirement to make them a new heart and a new spirit, was enforced by the weighty penalty of death. The death mentioned in the text cannot mean natural death; for natural death is common both to those who have, and to those who have not, a new heart. Nor can it mean spiritual death, which is a state of entire sinfulness; for then it should have read, Why are ye already dead! The death here spoken of must mean eternal death, or that state of banishment from God and the glory of his power, into which the soul shall be cast, that dies in its iniquities.

The command here addressed to the Israelites, is binding upon every impenitent sinner, to whom the Gospel shall be addressed. He is required to perform the same duty, upon the same penalty. It becomes, therefore, a matter of infinite importance that we should well understand, and fully and immediately obey, the requirement. The questions that would naturally arise to a reflecting mind on reading this text, are the following.

1. What are we to understand by the requirement to make a new heart and a new spirit?

2. Is it reasonable to require the performance of this duty on pain of eternal death?

3. How is this requirement, that we should make to us a new heart and a new spirit, consistent with the often repeated declarations of the Bible that a new heart is the gift and work of God?

Does God require of us the performance of this duty, without expecting its fulfillment, merely to show us our impotency and dependence upon him? Does he require us to make to ourselves a new heart, on pain of eternal death, when at the same time he knows we have no power to obey; and that if ever the work is done, he must himself do the very thing which he requires of us?

In order to answer these questions satisfactorily, I will attempt to show,

I. What is not the meaning of this requirement; and

II. What is.

I. What is not the meaning of this requirement.

It should here be observed, that although the Bible was not given to teach us mental philosophy, yet we may rest assured, that all its declarations are in accordance with the true philosophy of mind. The term spirit, in the Bible, is used in different senses: it sometimes means a spiritual being, or moral agent; in other places it is used in the sense in which we often employ it in conversation. In speaking of the temper of a man, we say he has a good or bad spirit, a lovely or hateful spirit. It is evidently used in this sense in the text. The term heart is also employed in various senses: sometimes it appears to be used as synonymous with soul; sometimes it evidently means the will; sometimes the conscience, sometimes it seems to be used in such an extensive sense, as to cover all the moral movements of the mind; sometimes it expresses the natural or social affections. The particular sense in which it is to be understood in any place, may easily be determined by the connexion in which it stands. Our present business is, to ascertain its meaning as used in the text; for it is in this sense, that we are required to make us a new heart and a new spirit. I begin, therefore, by saying,

- 1. That it does not mean the fleshly heart, or that bodily organ which is the seat of animal life.

- 2. That it does not mean a new soul. We have one soul, and do not need another. Nor,

- 3. Are we required to create any new faculties, of body or mind. We now have all the powers of moral agency; we are just as God made us, and do not need any alteration in the substance of soul or body. Nor,

- 4. Does it mean that we are to bring to pass any constitutional change in ourselves. We are not required to add to the constitution of our minds or bodies any new principle or taste. Some persons speak of a change of heart as something miraculous -- something in which the sinner is to be entirely passive, and for which he is to wait in the use of means, as he would wait for a surgical operation or an electric shock. We need nothing added to the constitution of our body or mind; nor is it true in experience, that those who have a new heart, have any constitutional alteration of their powers whatever. They are the same identical persons, so far as both body and mind are concerned, that they were before. The alteration lies in the manner in which they are disposed to use and do actually employ, their moral and physical powers. A constitutional change, either in body or mind, would destroy personal identity. A Christian, or one who has a new heart, would not be the same individual in regard to his powers of moral agency, that he was before -- would not be the same agent, and under the same responsibilities.

- Again -- A constitutional alteration and the implantation of a new principle, in the substance of his soul, or diffusing a new taste which is incorporated with, and becomes an essential part of his being, would destroy all the virtue of his obedience. It would make obedience to God a mere gratification of appetite, in which there would be no more real virtue than in eating, when we are hungry, or drinking, when we are thirsty.

- Again -- The constitutional implantation of a principle of holiness in the mind, or the creation of a constitutional taste for holiness, if such a thing were possible, would render the per severance of the saints physically necessary, make falling from grace a

natural impossibility, and would thus destroy all the virtue of perseverance.

- Again -- A constitutional change would dispense with the necessity of the Spirit's agency, after conversion. A re-creation of his faculties, the implantation of a holy taste, in the substance of his mind, would plainly dispense with any other agency on his part in after life, than that of upholding the creature in being, and giving him power to act; when, in obedience to the laws of his renewed nature, or in the gratification of his new appetite, he would obey of course.

But this implantation of a new principle, which dispenses with the necessity of the special influences of the Spirit in after life, is contrary to experience; for those who have a new heart, find that his constant agency is as indispensable to their perseverance in holiness, as it was to their conversion.

- Again -- The idea of a constitutional change, is inconsistent with backsliding. For if the constitution of the mind were changed, and a taste for holiness and obedience were implanted in the substance of the soul, it is manifest that to backslide, or to fall from grace, would be naturally as impossible as to alter the constitutional appetites of the body.

- Again -- A constitutional change, is unnecessary. It has been supposed by some, that the motives of the Gospel have no tendency to move the mind to obedience to God, unless there is something implanted in the mind which answers to the outward motive, between which and the motives of the Gospel there is a moral affinity. In other words, they maintain that as the motives of the Gospel are holy, there must be a holy taste or principle implanted in the substance of the mind, before these motives can act as motives at all; that there must be a taste corresponding to, and of the same nature with the outward motive, or there is nothing in the motive calculated to move the mind. That is, if the motive be holy, the constitutional taste must be holy; if the motive be sinful, the constitutional taste must be sinful. But this is absurd, and contrary to fact. Upon this principle, I would inquire, How could holy Adam sin? Did God, or the devil, first implant a constitutional sinful taste within him, answering to the outward motive? How could the holy angels sin? Did God also implant a sinful principle or taste in them? Or were Adam and "the angels that kept not their first estate," originally created with sinful tastes, answering to those outward motives? Then they were always sinners, and that by creation. Who then is the author of sin, and responsible for all their wickedness? It is true, the constitution of the mind must be suited to the nature of the outward influence or motive; and there must be such an adaptation of the mind to the motive, and of the motive to the mind, as is calculated to produce any desired action of the mind. But it is absurd to say, that this constitutional adaptation must be a holy principle, or taste, or craving after obedience to God. All holiness, in God, angels, or men, must be voluntary, or it is not holiness. To call any thing that is a part of the mind or body, holy -- to speak of a holy substance, unless it be in a figurative sense, is to talk nonsense. Holiness is virtue; it is something that is praiseworthy; it cannot therefore be a part of the created substance of body or mind, but must consist in voluntary obedience to the principles of eternal righteousness. The necessary adaptation of the outward motive to the mind, and of the mind to the motive, lies in the powers of moral agency, which every human being possesses. He has understanding to perceive and weigh; he has conscience to decide upon the nature of moral opposites; he has the power and liberty of choice. Now, to this moral agent possessing these faculties, the

motives of the Gospel re-addressed; and there is plainly a natural tendency in these weighty considerations to influence him to obey his Maker.

II. But I come now to show what we are to understand by the command of the text.

The Bible often speaks of the heart, as a fountain, from which flow the moral affections and actions of the soul, as in Matt. xv.19, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." The term heart, as applied to mind, is figurative, and recognizes an analogy between the heart of the body, and the heart of the soul. The fleshly organ of the body called the heart, is the seat and fountain of animal life, and by its constant action, diffuses life through the animal system. The spiritual heart, is the fountain of spiritual life, is that deep seated but voluntary preference of the mind, which lies back of all its other voluntary affections and emotions, and from which they take their character.

- In this sense I understand the term heart to be used in the text. It is evidently something over which we have control; something voluntary; something for which we are to blame, and which we are bound to alter! Now, if the requirement is, that we are to make some constitutional change in the substance of the body or mind, it is evidently unjust, and enforced by a penalty no less than infinite, as obedience is impossible, the requirement is infinite tyranny. It is evident that the requirement here, is to change our moral character; our moral disposition; in other words, to change that abiding preference of our minds, which prefers sin to holiness; self-gratification to the glory of God.

- I understand a change of heart, as the term is here used, to be just what we mean by a change of mind in regard to the supreme object of pursuit; a change in the choice of an end, not merely in the choice of means. An individual may change his mind, and prefer, at one time, one set of means, and at another time, another set, to accomplish the same end: a man who proposes to himself as the supreme object of pursuit, his own happiness, may, at one time imagine, that his highest happiness lies in the possession of worldly goods, and in pursuit of this end, may give himself wholly to the acquisition of wealth, in pursuing which he may often change his choice of means; at one time he may pursue merchandise; at another, the profession of law; and still again, the profession of medicine; but all these are only changes of mind in regard to the means of accomplishing the same selfish end.

- Again, he may see that his happiness does not consist in the abundance of wealth; that he is to exist for ever; that he therefore has a higher interest in the things of eternity than in those of time; he may accordingly enlarge his selfish aims, carry forward his interest into eternity, and propose as the supreme object of pursuit, the salvation of his soul. It is now an eternal, instead of a temporal interest that he seeks; which he proposes as the supreme object of pursuit; but still the end is his own happiness; the end is substantially the same, it is only the exercise of selfishness on a more ample and extended scale; instead of being satisfied with the happiness of time, selfishness aims at securing the bliss of eternity. When confining his views and desires to the acquisition of worldly good, he aimed at engrossing the affections, the services, the honors, and the wealth of the world; he now "lengthens the cords, and strengthens the stakes" of his selfishness; carries forward his aims, his desires, and exertions towards eternity; sets himself to pray, to read his Bible, and become marvelously religious; and would fain engross the affections, and enlist the powers, and command the services of all heaven, and of the eternal God. While his views were confined to earthly things, he was

satisfied that men should be his servants; but now, in the selfish pursuit of his own eternal happiness, he would fain call in all the attributes of Jehovah to serve him. But in all this there is no change of heart; he may have often changed in the choice of means, but his end has been always the same; his own happiness has been his idol.

A change of heart, then, consists in changing the controlling preference of the mind in regard to the end of pursuit. The selfish heart is a preference of self-interest to the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom. A new heart consists in a preference of the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom to one's own happiness. In other words, it is a change from selfishness to benevolence, from having a supreme regard to one's own interest to an absorbing and controlling choice of the happiness and glory of God and his kingdom.

- It is a change in the choice of a Supreme Ruler. The conduct of impenitent sinners demonstrates that they prefer Satan as the ruler of the world, they obey his laws, electioneer for him, and are zealous for his interest, even to martyrdom. They carry their attachment to him and his government so far as to sacrifice both body and soul to promote his interest and establish his dominion. A new heart is the choice of JEHOVAH as the supreme ruler; a deep-seated and abiding preference of his laws, and government, and character, and person, as the supreme Legislator and Governor of the universe.

Thus the world is divided into two great political parties; the difference between them is, that one party choose Satan as the god of this world, yield obedience to his laws, and are devoted to his interest. Selfishness is the law of Satan's empire, and all impenitent sinners yield it a willing obedience. The other party choose Jehovah for their governor, and consecrate themselves, with all their interests, to his service and glory. Nor does this change imply a constitutional alteration of the powers of body or mind, any more than a change of mind in regard to the form or administration of a human government.

There are certain things in regard to mind, with which we become familiar by experience.

- For instance, we know by experience that it is the nature of mind to be controlled in its individual exercises and affections, by a deep-seated disposition or preference of a particular course or object. It is not necessary here, to enter into the philosophy of this fact, but simply to recognize the fact itself.

- For instance, when Adam was first created, and awoke into being, before he had obeyed or disobeyed his Maker, he could have had no moral character at all: he had exercised no affections, no desires, not put forth any actions. In this state he was a complete moral agent; and in this respect in the image of his Maker; but as yet could have had no moral character; for moral character cannot be subject of creation, but attaches to voluntary action.

Do not understand me to affirm, that any considerable time elapsed between the creation of Adam and his possessing a moral character. It is presumed, that as soon as he awoke into being, and had knowledge of the existence and character of his Maker, the evidences of which doubtless shone all around him, he chose Him as his supreme ruler, and voluntarily dedicated all his powers to his service. This preference of God, and his glory, and service, over his own self-interest and every thing else, constituted his disposition, or his moral character; in other words, it was a perfectly holy heart. Out of this heart, or preference, flowed as from a

fountain the pure waters of obedience. All the subordinate movements, affections, choices, and purposes of the mind, and all the outward actions, flowed from this strong and governing preference for God and his service. Thus he went forth to dress God's garden, and keep it. Now, for a time, this preference of Adam was strong and abiding enough to insure perfect obedience in all things; for mind will act in consistency with an abiding preference.

- For instance, the strong preference that a man may have for home may forbid his entertaining any purpose of going abroad. The strength of his preference for his wife, may prevent his consenting to any improper intimacy with other women; and the probability, and I may say possibility, of betraying him into acts of infidelity to his wife, may depend upon the strength and abiding energy of his preference of her to all other women. So while the preference of Adam remained unshaken, its energy gave direction and character to all his feeling and to all his conduct; and that which must stamp perfection upon the obedience of heaven, is the great strength and continually abiding energy of their preference for God and his service. Indeed the continued holiness of God depends upon the same cause, and flows from the same fountain. His holiness does not consist in the substance of his nature, but in his preference of right. His holiness must be voluntary, and he is immutably holy, because he is infinitely strong, so strong and so abiding as never to admit of change; of any conduct inconsistent with it. Adam was perfectly holy, but not infinitely so. As his preference for God was not infinitely strong, it was possible that it might be changed, and we have the melancholy fact written in characters that cannot be misunderstood, on every side of us, that an occasion occurred on which he actually changed it. Satan, in the person of the serpent, presented a temptation of a very peculiar character. It was addressed to the constitutional appetites of both soul and body; to the appetite for food in the body, and for knowledge in the mind. These appetites were constitutional; they were not in themselves sinful, but their unlawful indulgence was sin.

The proposal of the serpent was, that he should change his mind in regard to the supreme end of pursuit; and this change his heart, or his whole moral character. "Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" and the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

- Now the foundation of holiness in Adam, and that which constituted his holy heart, was the supreme choice that God should rule; the supreme preference of God and his glory to his own happiness or interest. It is easy to see, therefore, that the object aimed at by the serpent was to affect a change in the supreme end of pursuit. It was to prefer his own gratification to obedience to his Maker; to become as a god himself instead of obeying Jehovah; to pursue as a supreme end self-gratification instead of the glory of God. In yielding therefore to this proposal, in changing his mind upon this fundamental point, he changed his own heart, or that controlling preference which was at once the foundation, and fountain, of all obedience.

- Now this was a real change of heart; from a perfectly holy, to a perfectly sinful one.

But there was no constitutional change, no change in the substance of either body or mind. It was not a change in the powers of moral agency themselves, but simply in the use of them; in consecrating their energies to a different end.

- Now suppose God to have come out upon Adam with the command of the text, "Make to you a new heart, for why will you die." Could Adam have justly answered, Dost thou think that I can change my own heart? Can I, who have a heart totally depraved, can I change that heart? Might not the Almighty have answered him in words of fire, Rebel, you have just changed your heart from holiness to sin, now change it back from sin to holiness.

- Suppose a human sovereign should establish a government, and propose as the great end of pursuit, to produce the greatest amount of happiness possible within his kingdom. He enacts wise and benevolent laws, calculated to promote this object to which he conforms all his own conduct; in the administration of which, he employs all his wisdom and energies, and requires all his subjects to sympathize with him; to aim at the same object; to be governed by the same end; the promotion of the highest interests of the community. Suppose these laws to be so framed, that universal obedience would necessarily result in universal happiness.

- Now suppose that one individual, after a session of obedience and devotion to the interest of the government and the glory of his sovereign, should be induced to withdraw his influence and energies from promoting the public good, and set up for himself; suppose him to say, I will no longer be governed by the principles of good will to the community, and find my own happiness in promoting the public interest; but will aim at promoting my own happiness and glory, in my own way, and let the sovereign and the subjects take care for themselves. "Charity begins at home."

- Now suppose him thus to set up for himself; to propose his own happiness and aggrandizement as the supreme object of his pursuit, and should not hesitate to trample upon the laws and encroach upon the rights, both of his sovereign and the subjects, wherever those laws or rights lay in the way of the accomplishment of his designs. It is easy to see, that he has become a rebel; has changed his heart, and consequently his conduct; has set up an interest not only separate from but opposed to the interest of his rightful sovereign. He has changed his heart from good to bad; from being an obedient subject he has become a rebel; from obeying his sovereign, he has set up an independent sovereignty; from trying to influence all men to obey the government, from seeking supremely the prosperity and the glory of his sovereign, he becomes himself a little sovereign; and as Absalom caught the men of Israel and kissed them, and thus stole away their hearts; so he now endeavors to engross the affections, to enlist the sympathies, to command the respect and obedience of all around him.

- Now what would constitute a change of heart in this man towards his sovereign? I answer, for him to go back, to change his mind in regard to the supreme object of pursuit; -- to prefer the glory of his sovereign and the good of the public to his own separate interest, would constitute a change of heart.

- Now this is the case with the sinner; God has established a government, and proposed by the exhibition of his own character, to produce the greatest practicable amount of happiness in the universe. He has enacted laws wisely calculated to promote this object, to which he conforms all his own conduct, and to which he requires all his subjects

perfectly and undeviatingly to conform theirs. After a season of obedience, Adam changed his heart, and set up for himself. So with every sinner, although he does not first obey, as Adam did; yet his wicked heart consists in setting up his own interest in opposition to the interest and government of God. In aiming to promote his own private happiness, in a way that is opposed to the general good. Self-gratification becomes the law to which he conforms his conduct. It is that minding of the flesh, which is enmity against God.

A change of heart, therefore, is to prefer a different end. To prefer supremely the glory of God and the public good, to the promotion of his own interest; and whenever this preference is changed, we see of course a corresponding change of conduct. If a man change sides in politics, you will see him meeting with those that entertain the same views and feelings with himself; devising plans and using his influence to elect the candidate which he has now chosen. He has new political friends on the one side, and new political enemies on the other. So with a sinner; if his heart is changed, you will see that Christians become his friends -- Christ his candidate. He aims at honoring him and promoting his interest in all his ways. Before, the language of his conduct was, "Let Satan govern the world." Now, the language of his heart and of his life is, "Let Christ rule King of nations, as he is King of saints." Before, his conduct said, "O Satan, let thy kingdom come, and let thy will be done." Now, his heart, his life, his lips cry out, "O Jesus, let thy kingdom come, let thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

In proof that the change which I have described constitutes a change of heart, if any proof is necessary --

- 1. I observe, first, that he who actually does prefer the glory of God, and the interest of his kingdom, to his own selfish interest, is a Christian; and that he who actually prefers his own selfish interest to the glory of God, is an impenitent sinner.

The fundamental difference lies in this ruling preference, this fountain, this heart, out of which flows their emotions, their affections, and actions. As the difference between them consists not in the substance of their minds or bodies, but in the voluntary state of mind in which they are, it is just as unphilosophical, absurd, and unnecessary, to suppose that a physical or constitutional change has taken place in him who has the new heart, as to infer, that because a man has changed his politics, therefore his nature is changed. Further, this new preference needs only to become deep and energetic enough in its influence, to stamp the perfection of heaven upon the whole character. From long cherished habits of sin, and acting under the dominion of an opposite preference, when it comes really to be changed, it is often weak and measurably inefficient; and consequently the mind often acts in inconsistency with this general preference. Accordingly, God says to Israel, "How weak is thine heart!" Like a man who is so little under the influence either of principle or of affection for his wife, that although upon the whole, and in general, he prefers her to any other woman, yet he may occasionally be guilty of an act of infidelity to her. Now what is needed in the case of a Christian is, that his old habits of thought, and feeling, and action, should be broken up; that his new preference should gain strength, stability, firmness, and perpetuity; and thus take the control of the whole man. This process constitutes sanctification. Every act of obedience to God strengthens this preference, and renders future obedience more natural. The perfect control of this

preference over all the moral movements of the mind, brings a man back to where Adam was previous to the fall, and constitutes perfect holiness.

Once more -- If a change of heart was physical, or a change in the constitution of the mind, it would have no moral character. The change, to have moral character, must be voluntary. To constitute a change of heart, it must not only be voluntary, but must be a change in the governing preference of the mind. It must be a change in regard to the supreme object of pursuit.

Finally, it is a fact in the experience of every Christian, that the change through which he has passed is nothing else than that which I have described. In speaking from experience, he can say, Whereas I once preferred my own separate interest to the glory of my Maker, now I prefer his glory and the interests of his kingdom, and consecrate all my powers to the promotion of them for ever.

- 2. The second inquiry is, whether the requirement of the text is reasonable and equitable. The answer to this question must depend upon the nature of the duty to be performed. If the change be a physical one, a change in the constitution or substance of the soul, it is clearly not within the scope of our ability, and the answer to the question must be, No, it is not reasonable nor equitable. To maintain that we are under obligation to do what we have no power to do, is absurd. If we are under an obligation to do a thing, and do it not, we sin. For the blame-worthiness of sin consists in its being the violation of an obligation. But if we are under an obligation to do what we have no power to do, then sin is unavoidable; we are forced to sin by a natural necessity. But this is contrary to right reason, to make sin to consist in any thing that is forced upon us by the necessity of nature. Besides, if it is sin, we are bound to repent of it, heartily to blame ourselves, and justify the requirement of God; but it is plainly impossible for us to blame ourselves for not doing what we are conscious we never had any power to do.

Suppose God should command a man to fly; would the command impose upon him any obligation, until he was furnished with wings? Certainly not. But suppose, on his failing to obey, God should require him to repent of his disobedience, and threaten to send him to hell if he did not heartily blame himself, and justify the requirement of God. He must cease to be a reasonable being before he can do this. He knows that God never gave him power to fly, and therefore he had no right to require it of him. His natural sense of justice, and of the foundation of obligation, is outraged, and he indignantly and conscientiously throws back the requirement into his Maker's face. Repentance, in this case, is a natural impossibility; while he is a reasonable being, he knows that he is not to blame for not flying without wings; and however much he may regret his not being able to obey the requirement, and however great may be his fear of the wrath of God, still to blame himself and justify God is a natural impossibility. As, therefore, God requires men to make to themselves a new heart, on pain of eternal death, it is the strongest possible evidence that they are able to do it. To say that he has commanded them to do it, without telling them they are able, is consummate trifling. Their ability is implied as strongly as it can be, in the command itself.

From all this it will be seen, that the answer to the question, whether the requirement in the text is just, must turn upon the question of man's ability; and the question of ability must turn upon the nature of the change itself. If the change is physical, it is clearly beyond the power of man; it is something over which he has no more control than he had over the creation of his soul and body. But if the change is moral -- in other words, if it be voluntary, a change of choice or preference, such as I have described, then the answer to the question, Is the requirement of the text just and reasonable? clearly is, Yes, it is entirely reasonable and just;

- 1. Because you have all the powers of moral agency; and the thing required is, not to alter these powers, but to employ them in the service of your Maker. God has created these powers, and you can and do use them. He gives you power to obey or disobey; and your sin is, that while he sustains these powers, you prostitute them to the service of sin and Satan.

Again -- These powers are as well suited to obedience as to disobedience. Your wickedness consists in a wrong but obstinate choice of sin. But is it not as easy to choose right as wrong? Are not the motives to a right choice infinitely greater than to a wrong one? Could Adam reasonably have objected that he was unable to change his choice? Could Satan object that he had no power to change the governing preference of his mind, and to prefer the glory of his Maker to rebellion against his throne? If Satan, or Adam, or you, can reasonably bring forward this objection, then there is no such thing as sin in earth or hell.

Again -- God only requires of you to choose and act reasonably, for certainly it is in accordance with right reason to prefer the glory of God, and the interest of his immense kingdom, to your own private interest. It is an infinitely greater good; therefore you, and God, and all his creatures, are bound to prefer it. But I said the motives to a right preference are infinitely greater than to a wrong one. Sinners often complain that they are so influenced by motives, that they cannot resist iniquity. They often excuse their sins, by pleading that the temptation was too strong for them. Sinner, why is it, while you are so easily influenced by motives as to complain that you cannot resist them; that you are too weak to resist their influence to sin; that you are strong enough to resist the world of motives that come rolling upon you like a wave of fire, to do right and obey your Maker?

- 2. When the Son of God approaches you, gathering motives from heaven, earth, and hell, and pours them in a focal blaze upon your mind, how is it that you are strong enough to resist? You, whose mind is yielding as air to motives to sin; who are all weakness, and complain that you cannot resist when tempted to disobey God, can exert such a giant strength, I had almost said the strength of Omnipotence, in resisting the infinite weight of motive that rolls upon you from every quarter of the universe, to obey God. It is clear that if you did not exert the whole strength of moral agency to resist, these consideration would change your heart.

- 3. I come now to the third and last inquiry, viz: How is this requirement, to "make to yourself a new heart," consistent with the often repeated declarations of the Bible, that a new heart is the gift and work of God. The Bible ascribes conversion, or a new heart, to four different agencies. Oftentimes it is ascribed to the Spirit of God. And if you consult the Scriptures, you will find it still more frequently ascribed to the truth; as, "Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth" -- "The truth shall make you free" -- "Sanctify them through thy truth" -- "The law of God is perfect, converting the soul." It is sometimes ascribed to the preacher, or to him who presents the truth; "He that winneth souls is wise: " Paul says, "I have begotten you through the Gospel" -- "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins." Sometimes it is spoken of as the work of the sinner himself: thus the apostle says, "Ye have purified yourselves by obeying the truth;" "I thought on my ways," says the Psalmist, "and turned unto the Lord." Again he says, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart replied, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

- 4. Now the question is, Are all these declarations of Scripture consistent with each other? They are all true; they all mean just as they say; nor is there any real disagreement between them. There is a sense in which conversion is the work of God. There is a sense in which it is the effect of truth. There is a sense in which the preacher does it. And it is also the appropriate work of the sinner himself.

The fact is, that the actual turning, or change, is the sinner's own act. The agent who induces him, is the Spirit of God. A secondary agent, is the preacher, or individual who presents the truth. The truth is the instrument, or motive, which the Spirit uses to induce the sinner to turn. Suppose yourself to be standing on the bank of the Falls of Niagara. As you stand upon the verge of the precipice, you behold a man lost in deep reverie, approaching its verge unconscious of his danger. He approaches nearer and nearer, until he actually lifts his foot to take the final step that shall plunge him in destruction. At this moment you lift your warning voice above the roar of the foaming waters, and cry out, Stop. The voice pierces his ear, and breaks the charm that binds him; he turns instantly upon his heel, all pale and aghast he retires, quivering, from the verge of death. He reels, and almost swoons with horror; turns and walks slowly to the public house; you follow him; the manifest agitation in his countenance calls numbers around him: and on your approach, he points to you, and says, That man saved my life. Here he ascribes the work to you; and certainly there is a sense in which you had saved him. But, on being further questioned, he says, Stop! how that word rings in my ears. Oh, that was to me the word of life. Here he ascribes it to the word that aroused him, and caused him to turn. But, on conversing still further, he said, had I not turned at that instant, I should have been a dead man. Here he speaks of it, and truly, as his own act; but directly you hear him say, O the mercy of God; if God had not interposed, I should have been lost. Now the only defect in this illustration is this: In the case supposed, the only interference on the part of God, was a providential one: and the only sense in which the saving of the man's life is ascribed to him, is in a providential sense. But in the conversion of a sinner there is something more than the providence of God

> employed; for here not only does the providence of God so order it, that the preacher cries, Stop, but the Spirit of God forces the truth home upon him with such tremendous power as to induce him to turn.
>
> Not only does the preacher cry, Stop, but, through the living voice of the preacher, the Spirit cries, Stop. The preacher cries, "Turn ye, why will ye die." The Spirit pours the expostulation home with such power, that the sinner turns.

Now, in speaking of this change, it is perfectly proper to say, that the Spirit turned him, just as you would say a man, who had persuaded another to change his mind on the subject of politics, that he had converted him, and brought him over. It is also proper to say that the truth converted him: as in a case when the political sentiments of a man were changed by a certain argument, we should say, that argument brought him over. So also with perfect propriety may we ascribe the change to the living preacher, or to him who had presented the motives; just as we should say of a lawyer who had prevailed in his argument with a jury; he has got his case, he has converted the jury. It is also with the same propriety ascribed to the individual himself whose heart is changed; we should say that he had changed his mind, he has come over, he has repented.

Now it is strictly true, and true in the most absolute and highest sense; the act is his own act, the turning is his own turning, while God by the truth has induced him to turn; still it is strictly true that he has turned and has done it himself. Thus you see the sense in which it is the work of God, and also the sense in which it is the sinner's own work. The Spirit of God, by the truth, influences the sinner to change, and in this sense is the efficient cause of the change. But the sinner actually changes, and is therefore himself, in the most proper sense, the author of the change. There are some who, on reading their Bibles, fasten their eyes upon those passages that ascribe the work to the Spirit of God, and seem to overlook those that ascribe it to man, and speak of it as the sinner's own act. When they have quoted Scripture to prove it is the work of God, they seem to think they have proved that it is that in which man is passive, and that it can in no sense be the work of man. Some months since a tract was written, the title of which was, "Regeneration is the effect of Divine Power." The writer goes on to prove that the work is wrought by the Spirit of God, and there he stops.

Now it had been just as true, just as philosophical, and just as Scriptural, if he had said, that conversion was the work of man. It was easy to prove that it was the work of God, in the sense in which I have explained it. The writer therefore tells the truth so far as he goes; but he has told only half the truth. For while there is a sense in which it is the work of God, as he has shown, there is also a sense in which it is the work of man, as we have just seen. The very title to this tract is a stumbling block. It tells the truth, but it does not tell the whole truth. And a tract might be written upon this proposition that "conversion or regeneration is the work of man;" which would be just as true, just as Scriptural, and just as philosophical, as the one to which I have alluded. Thus the writer, in his zeal to recognize and honor God as concerned in this work, by leaving out the fact that a change of heart is the sinner's own act, has left the sinner strongly intrenched, with his weapons in his rebellious hands, stoutly resisting the claims of his Maker, and waiting passively for God to make him a new heart. Thus you see the consistency between the requirement of the text, and the declared fact that God is the author of the new heart. God commands you to do it, expects you to do it, and if it ever is done, you must do it.

I shall conclude this discourse with several inferences and remarks.

1st. Sinners make their own wicked hearts.Their preference of sin is their own voluntary act. They make self-gratification the rule to which they conform all their conduct. When they come into being, the first principle that we discover in their conduct, is their determination to gratify themselves. It soon comes to pass that any effort to thwart them in the gratification of their appetites, is met by them with strong resistance, they seem to set their hearts full to purpose their own happiness, and gratify themselves, come what will; and thus they will successively make war on their nurse, their parents, and their God, when ever they find that their requirements prohibit the pursuit of this end. Now this is purely a voluntary state of mind. This state of mind is not a subject of creation, it is entirely the result of temptation to selfishness, arising out of the circumstances under which the child comes into being. This preference to selfishness is suffered by the sinner to grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength, until this desperately wicked heart bears him onward to the gates of hell.

2nd. From what has been said, the necessity of a change of heart is most manifest.The state of mind in which impenitent sinners are, is called by the apostle the "carnal mind;" or as it should have been rendered, "the minding of the flesh is enmity against God." The child at first gives up the rein to the bodily appetites. God requires him to keep under his body, and to make it the instrument of his soul in the service of God -- to subject and subordinate all its passions to the will of its Maker. But instead of this, he makes the gratification of his appetites and passions, the law of his life. It is that law in his members, of which the apostle speaks, as warring against the law of his mind. This state of mind, is the direct opposite of the character and requirements of God. With this heart, the salvation of the sinner is a manifest impossibility.

3rd. In the light of this subject, you can see the nature and degree of the sinner's dependence on the Spirit of God.The Spirit's agency is not needed to give him power, but to overcome his voluntary obstinacy. Some persons seem to suppose that the Spirit is employed to give the sinner power -- that he is unable to obey God, without the Spirit's agency. I am alarmed when I hear such declarations as these; and were it not, that I suppose there is a sense in which a man's heart may be better than his head, I should feel bound to maintain, that persons holding this sentiment, were not Christians at all. I have already shown that a man is under no obligation to do what he has no ability to do; in other words that his obligation, is only commensurate with his ability. That he cannot blame himself for not having exerted a power, that he never possessed. If he believes, therefore, that he has no power to obey his Maker, it is impossible that he should blame himself for not doing it. And if he believes that the Spirit's agency is indispensable to make him able; consistency must compel him to maintain, that without this superadded agency, he is under no obligation to obey. This giving the sinner power, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to obey God, is what the Arminians call a gracious ability, which terms are a manifest absurdity. What is grace? It is undeserved favor; something to which we have no claim in justice. That which may be withheld without injustice. If this is a true definition, it is plain that a gracious ability to do our duty is absurd. It is a dictate of reason, of conscience, of common sense, and of our natural sense of justice, that if God require of us the performance of any duty or act, he is bound in justice to give us power to obey; i. e. he must give us the faculties and strength to perform the act. But if justice require this, why call it a gracious ability. Natural ability to do our duty cannot be a gracious ability. To call it so, is to confound grace and justice as meaning the same thing. The sin of disobedience then must lie, not in his having broken the law of God, but

solely in his not having complied with the striving of the Spirit. Accordingly the definition of sin should be, upon these principles, not that "sin is a transgression of the law," but that it consists in not yielding to the influence of the Spirit. While therefore he is not sensible that the Spirit is giving him power, he can feel under no obligation to be converted; nor can he, upon any principles of reason, blame himself. How, I would ask, is it possible that with these views he can repent? And how, upon these principles, is he to blame for not having repented and turned to the Lord?

But, to illustrate both the nature and degree of man's dependence on the Spirit, suppose a man to be bent upon self-murder; in the absence of his wife he loads his pistols, and prepares to commit the horrid deed. His little child observes the disorder of his mind, and says, Father, what are you going to do? Be still, he replies, I am going to blow my brains out. The little one weeps, spreads out its little beggar hands, beseeches him to desist, and pours out his little prayers, and tears, and agonizing entreaties, to spare his life. Now if the eloquence of this child's grief, his prayers, and tears, could prevail to change the obstinacy of his purpose, he would need no other influence to subdue and change his mind. But the parent persisting, the child screams to his mother, who flies at the voice of its entreaty, and on being told the cause of its anguish, hastens, upon the wings of terror, to her husband's apartment, and conjures him to change his purpose. By his love for his family -- by their love for him -- by their dependence upon him -- in view of the torn heart, and distraction of the wife of his bosom -- by the anguish, the tears, the helplessness of his babes -- by the regard he has for his own soul -- by the hope of heaven -- by the terrors of hell -- by every thing tender and persuasive in life -- by all that is solemn in the final judgment, and terrible in the pains of the second death, she conjures him, over and over again, not to rush upon his own destruction. Now if all this can move him, he needs no other and higher influence to change his mind. But when she fails in her efforts, suppose she could summon all the angels of God, and they also should fail to move and melt him by their unearthly eloquence; here, then, some higher power must interfere, or the man is lost. But just as he puts his pistol to his ear, the Spirit of God, who knows perfectly the state of his mind, and understands all the reasons that have led him to this desperate determination, gathers such a world of motive, and pours them in such a focal blaze upon his soul, that he instantly quails, drops the weapon from his nerveless hand, relinquishes his purpose of death for ever, falls upon his knees, and gives glory to God.

Now it was the strength of the man's voluntary purpose of self-destruction alone, that made the Spirit's agency at all necessary in the case. Would he have yielded to all the motives that had been before presented, and should have subdued him, no interposition of the Holy Spirit had been necessary. But it was the wickedness, and the obstinacy of the wretch, that laid the only foundation for the Spirit's interference. Now this is the sinner's case. He has set his heart fully to do evil, and if the prayers and tears of friends, and of the church of God -- the warning of ministers -- the rebukes of Providence -- the commands, the expostulations, the tears, and groans, and death of God's dear Son: if the offer of heaven, or the threatening of hell could overcome his obstinate preference of sin, the Spirit's agency would be uncalled for. But because no human persuasion, no motive that man or angel can get home upon his mind, will cause him to turn; therefore the Spirit of God must interpose to shake his preference, and turn him back from hell. The degree of his dependence upon the Spirit, is just the degree of his obstinacy; were he but slightly inclined to pursue the road to death, men could change him without calling upon God for help; but just in proportion to the strength of his preference for sin, is it necessary that the Spirit should interpose or he is lost. Thus you see, the sinner's dependence upon the Spirit of God, instead of being his excuse, is that which constitutes his guilt.

4th. Again -- You see from this subject the NATURE of the Spirit's agency.That he does not act by direct physical contact upon the mind, but that he uses the truth as his sword to pierce the sinner; and that the motives presented in the Gospel are the instruments he uses to change the sinner's heart. Some have doubted this, and supposed that it is equivalent to denying the Spirit's agency altogether to maintain that he converts sinners by motives. Others have denied the possibility of changing the heart by motives. But did not the serpent change Adam's heart by motives; and cannot the Spirit of God with infinitely higher motives exert as great power over mind as he can? Can the old serpent change a heart from a perfectly holy to a perfectly sinful one by the power of motives, and cannot the infinitely wise God, do as much as Satan did? Verily, to deny this, looks much like detracting from the wisdom and power of God. But that the Scripture abundantly declares that the Spirit converts sinners by the power of motive is most manifest -- "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," is one out of the many express declarations upon this subject. The philosophy of this subject is settled by the Bible; it is a subject upon which we are not at liberty to speculate, and from our own philosophical theories, and maintain that by direct physical contact, irrespective of truth, God interposes and changes the sinner's heart. When God says, "Of his own will he has begotten us with the word of truth," this settles the question; and is equivalent to saying, that he has not begotten us in any other manner.

The very terms used by our Saviour in the promise of the Spirit to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of a judgment to come, strongly imply the mode of his agency. The term rendered Comforter in our translation of the Bible, is Parakletos; it is the same term which, in one of the epistles of John, is rendered Advocate. The term is there applied to Jesus Christ. It is there said, "If any man sin, we have a Parakletos, or an Advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous." In this passage Jesus Christ is spoken of as the Advocate of men with God. The Parakletos, or Comforter, promised by our Savior, is represented as God's Advocate, to plead His cause with men. The term rendered reprove or convince in our translation is a law term, and signifies the summing up of an argument, and establishing or demonstrating the sinner's guilt. Thus the strivings of the Spirit of God with men, is not a physical scuffling, but a debate; a strife not of body with body, but of mind with mind; and that in the action and reaction of vehement argumentation. From these remarks, it is easy to answer the question sometimes put by individuals who seem to be entirely in the dark upon this subject, whether in converting the soul the Spirit acts directly on the mind, or on the truth. This is the same nonsense as if you should ask, whether an earthly advocate who had gained his cause, did it by acting directly and physically on the jury, or on his argument.

5th. Again -- It is evident from this subject that God never does, in changing the sinner's heart, what he requires the sinner to do.Some persons, as I have already observed, seem disposed to be passive, to wait for some mysterious influence, like an electric shock, to change their hearts. But in this attitude, and with these views, they may wait till the day of judgment, and God will never do their duty for them. The fact is, sinners, that God requires you to turn, and what he requires of you, he cannot do for you. It must be your own voluntary act. It is not the appropriate work of God to do what he requires of you. Do not wait then for him to do your duty, but do it immediately yourself, on pain of eternal death.

6th. This subject shows also, that if the sinner ever has a new heart, he must obey the command of the text, and make it himself.But here some one may interpose and say, Is not this taking the work out of God's hands, and robbing him of the glory? No. It is the only view of the subject that gives the glory to God. Some in their zeal to magnify the grace of

the Gospel, entirely overthrow it. They maintain the sinner's inability, and thereby do away his guilt. Instead of considering him a guilty, voluntary rebel, and worthy of eternal death, they make him a helpless, unfortunate creature, unable to do what God requires of him. Instead of making his only difficulty to consist in an unwillingness, they insist upon his inability, and thus destroy his guilt, and of course the grace displayed in his salvation. For what grace can there be in helping an unfortunate individual? If sinners are unable to obey God, precisely in proportion to their inability, are they guiltless. But if they are unwilling, if their cannot is a will not, we have already seen that their guilt is in proportion to the strength of their unwillingness, and grace in their salvation must be equal to their guilt. Nor does it detract from the glory of God that the act of turning is the sinner's own act. The fact is, he never does, and never will turn, unless God induces him to do it; so that although the act is the sinner's own, yet the glory belongs to God, inasmuch as he caused him to act. If a man had made up his mind to take his own life, and you should, by taking the greatest pains, and at great expense, prevail upon him to desist, would you deserve no credit for the influences you exerted in the case? Though changing his mind and relinquishing his purpose of self-destruction was his own act, inasmuch as you was the sole cause of his turning, and as it was certain that had you not interfered he would have done the horrid deed, are you not entitled to just as much praise as if his own agency had not been at all concerned in turning? Might it not in truth be said that you had turned him?

7th. But again -- The idea that the Spirit converts sinners by the truth, is the only view of the subject that honours either the Spirit, or the truth of God.The work of conversion is spoken of in the Bible as a work of exceeding great power; and I once heard a clergyman, expatiating upon the great powers of God in conversion -- although he appeared to view it as a physical alteration of the constitution of man, as the implantation of a new principle, or taste -- assert that it was a greater exertion of power than that which hung out the heavens. The reason which he assigned for its being such a great exertion of power was, that in the creation of the material universe, he had no opposition, but in the conversion of a soul, he had all the powers of hell to oppose him. Now this is whimsical and ridiculous enough. As if the opposition of hell could oppose any obstacle in the way of physical Omnipotence. The power which God exerts in the conversion of a soul, is moral power; it is that kind of power by which a statesman sways the mind of a senate; or by which an advocate moves and bows the heart of a jury; by which "David bowed the heart of all Israel, as the heart of one man." Now when we consider the deep-rooted selfishness of the sinner; his long cherished habits of sin; his multifarious excuses and refuges of lies; it is a most sublime exhibition of wisdom and of moral power to pursue him step by step with truth, to hunt him from his refuges of lies, to constrain him by the force of argument alone, to yield up his selfishness and dedicate himself to the service of God. This reflects a glory and a lustre over the truth of God and the agency of the Holy Spirit, that at once delights and amazes the beholder.

8th. But again -- The idea that the Spirit uses motives to change the heart, is the only view that gives consistency, and meaning to the often repeated injunction, not to resist the Holy Ghost -- not to strive with his Maker.For if the Spirit operated upon the mind by direct physical contact, the idea of effectually resisting physical omnipotence is ridiculous. The same thought applies to those passages that caution us against grieving and quenching the Spirit.

9th. Again -- You see from this subject that a sinner, under the influence of the Spirit of God, is just as free as a jury under the arguments of an advocate.Here also you may see the importance of right views on this point. Suppose a lawyer, in addressing a jury, should not expect to change their minds by any thing he could say, but should wait for an invisible and

physical agency, to be exerted by the Holy Ghost upon them. And suppose, on the other hand, that the jury thought that in making up their verdict, they must be passive, and wait for a direct physical agency to be exerted upon them. In vain might the lawyer plead, and in vain might the jury hear, for until he pressed his arguments as if he was determined to bow their hearts, and until they make up their minds, and decide the question, and thus act like rational beings, both his pleading and their hearing is in vain. So if a minister goes into a desk to preach to sinners, believing that they have no power to obey the truth, and under the impression that a direct physical influence must be exerted upon them before they can believe, and if his audience be of the same opinion, in vain does he preach, and in vain do they hear, "for they are yet in their sins;" they sit and quietly wait for some invisible hand to be stretched down from heaven, and perform some surgical operation, infuse some new principle, or implant some constitutional taste; after which they suppose they shall be able to obey God. Ministers should labour with sinners, as a lawyer does with a jury, and upon the same principles of mental philosophy; and the sinner should weigh his arguments, and make up his mind as upon oath and for his life, and give a verdict upon the spot, according to law and evidence.

But here perhaps some one will ask, If truth, when seen in all its bearings and relations, is the instrument of converting the sinner, why will he not be converted in hell, where it is supposed that all the truth will burst upon his mind in all its burning reality? In answer to this, I observe, that the motive that prevails to turn the convicted rebel to God, will, in hell, be wanting. When the sinner is crowded with conviction and ready to go to despair, and ready to flee and hide himself from the presence of his Maker, he is met by the offer of reconciliation, which, together with the other motives that are weighing like a mountain upon his mind, sweetly constrain him to yield himself up to God. But in hell the offer of reconciliation will be wanting; the sinner will be in despair; and while in despair it is a moral impossibility to turn his heart to God. Let a man in this life so completely ruin his fortune as to have no hope of retrieving it; in this state of absolute despair, no motive can reach him to make him put forth an effort; he has no sufficient motive to attempt it; so if his reputation is so completely gone that he has no hope of retrieving it, in this state of despair, there is no possibility of reclaiming him; no motive can reach him and call forth an effort to redeem his character, because he is without hope. So in hell, the poor dying sinner will be shut up in despair; his character is gone; his fortune for eternity is lost; there is no offer, no hope of reconciliation; and punishment will but drive him further and further from God for ever and ever.

10th. But, says the objector, if right apprehensions of truth presented by the Spirit of God convert a sinner, does it not follow that his ignorance is the cause of his sin?I answer, No! Had Adam kept what truth he knew steadily before his mind, he doubtless would have resisted the temptation; but suffering his mind to be diverted from the reasons for obedience to the motives to disobedience, he failed, of course. When he had fallen, and selfishness had become predominant, he was averse to knowing and weighing the reasons for turning again to God; and if ever he was turned the Spirit of God must have pressed the subject upon him. So with every sinner: he at first sins against what knowledge he has by overlooking the motives to obedience, and yielding himself up to the motives to disobedience, and when once he has adopted the selfish principle, his ignorance becomes wilful and sinful, and unless the Spirit of God induce him, he will not see. He knows the truth to a sufficient extent to leave him without excuse, but he will not consider it and let it have its effect upon him.

But the objector may still ask, Is it not true, after all, if a full and sufficiently impressive knowledge of truth is all that is necessary to subdue the sinner, that he only needs to know

the true character of God to love it, and that his enmity against God arises out of his false notions of him? Is it not a false and not the true character of God that he hates? I answer, No! It is the true character of God that he hates. He hates God for what he is, and not for what he is not. The sinner's character is selfishness: God's character is benevolence. These are eternal opposites. The sinner hates God because he is opposed to his selfishness. While the man remains selfish, it is absurd to say that he is reconciled to the true character of God. But is not his ignorance the cause of his selfishness? No! he knows better than to be selfish. It is true he does not, nor will he unless compelled by the Holy Spirit, consider the unreasonableness of selfishness. The work of the Holy Spirit does not consist merely in giving instruction, but in compelling him to consider truths which he already knows -- to think upon his ways and turn to the Lord. He urges upon his attention and consideration those motives which he hates to consider and feel the weight of. It is probable, if not certain, that had all the motives to obedience been broadly before the mind of Adam, or any other sinner, and had the mind duly considered them at the time, he would not have sinned. But the fact is, sinners do not set what truth they know before the mind, but divert the attention and rush on to hell.

Will any one still reply that although it is true that the sinner's wilful inconsideration and diverting his attention lays the only foundation for the necessity of the Spirit's influences, yet, is it not His great business to remove this ignorance occasioned by the sinner's wilful rejection of light? What does consideration do, but to bring the sinner to a juster knowledge of himself, of God, and of his duty, and thus, by force of truth, constrain him to yield? If by ignorance be meant a wilful perverse rejection of light and knowledge, I suppose that it is this state of mind which is not merely the cause of his sin, but it is his sin itself. The Apostle views the subject in this light: in speaking of sinners, he says, "Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

It is indeed the pressing of truth upon the sinner's consideration that induces him to turn. But it is not true that he is ignorant of these truths before he thus considers them. He knows he must die -- that he is a sinner -- that God is right and he is wrong -- that there is a heaven and a hell -- but, as the prophet says, "They will not see" -- and again, "My people will not consider." It is not mainly then to instruct, but to lead the sinner to think upon his ways, that the Spirit employs his agency. I have already shown why he will not be converted when truth is forced upon him in hell.

11th. But here some one may say, Is not this exhibition of the subject inconsistent with that mystery of which Christ speaks, when he says, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit?"

Says the objector, I have been in the habit of considering the subject of a new heart, as a very mysterious one: but you make it very plain. How is this? Does not Christ, in the text I have quoted, represent it as mysterious? In answer to this I would ask, Wherein does Christ, in that text, represent the mystery of the new birth as consisting? Not in the effects which the Spirit produces, for the effects are matters of experience and observation. Not in the instrumentality used, for this is often revealed in the Bible. But the mystery lies in the manner of the Spirit's communicating with mind. How disembodied spirits communicate with each other, we are unable to say -- or how a disembodied spirit can communicate with one that wears a body, we do not know. We know that we communicate with each other through the medium of our bodily senses. The particular manner in which the Spirit of God

carries on his debates and strivings with the mind, is what, in this life, we shall probably never know. Nor is it important that we should. Every Christian knows that in some way the truth was kept before his mind, and made to bear, and press upon him, and hedge him in, until he was constrained to yield. These are matters of experience; but in what particular manner the Holy Spirit did this, is just as mysterious as millions of other facts, which we daily witness, but cannot explain.

12th. But here perhaps another objection may arise -- If the sinner is able to convert himself, why does he need the Spirit of God?Suppose a man owed you one hundred dollars, was abundantly able, but wholly unwilling to pay you; you obtain a writ, and prepare, by instituting a suit against him, to ply him with a motive that will constrain him to be honest and pay his debts. Now suppose that he should say, I am perfectly able to pay this hundred dollars, of what use then is this writ, and a sheriff, and a lawsuit? The answer is, It is to make him willing -- to be sure, he is able but he is unwilling. Just so with the sinner -- he is able to do his duty, but is unwilling, therefore the Spirit of God plies him with motives to make him willing.

13th. Again -- You see that sinners should not content them selves with praying for a new heart.It has been common for those who believe that sinners are unable to change their own heart, when sinners have inquired what they should do to be saved, to substitute another requirement for that contained in the text, and instead of commanding them to make to them a new heart, have told them to pray that God would change their heart. They have used language like the following: "You must remember that you are dependent on God for a new heart. Do not attempt to do any thing in your own strength -- attend to your Bible, use the means of grace, call upon God to change your heart, and wait patiently for the answer."

A few years since, a lawyer, under deep conviction of sin, came to my room to inquire what he should do to be saved. He informed me that when in college, he, with two others were deeply anxious for their souls; that they waited on the president, and inquired what they should do. His directions were, in substance, that they should read their Bibles, keep clear of vain company, use the means of grace, and pray for a new heart, and that ere long they would either be converted, or would give up reading their Bibles and using means for their salvation. On being questioned how the matter terminated, he replied, that it turned out as the president told them it would; they soon gave up reading their Bibles, and using means. He said that the directions of the president relieved his mind, and that the more he prayed and used the means, the less distress he felt. That as he thought he was now doing his duty, and in a hopeful way, the more he read his Bible and prayed, the more acceptable he thought himself to God, and the more likely to be converted. The more diligent he was in using means, the more self-complacent and contented he became -- and thus prayed and waited for God to change his heart till his convictions had entirely worn away, and with a burst of grief he added, thus it turned out with us all. The other two are confirmed drunkards, and I have well nigh ruined myself by drink. Now if there is any hope in my case, tell me what I shall do to be saved. On being told to repent, and pressed to the immediate performance of the duty, he, to all appearance, yielded up himself to God upon the spot. Now the result of the directions given by the president, was strictly philosophical. The advice was just such as would please the devil. It would answer his purpose infinitely better than to have told them to abandon all thoughts of religion at once, for this would have shocked and frightened them, and, anxious as they were, they would have turned with abhorrence from such advice; but setting them upon this sanctimonious method of praying and waiting for God to do what he required of them, was soothing to their consciences; substituting another requirement in the place of the command of God, fostering their spirit of delay, confirming them in

self-righteousness, and one of two results must have been expected -- either that they would embrace a false hope, or no hope at all. For it was perfectly natural and reasonable, if this was their duty, to pray, and use the means, and wait for God, for them to suppose that, as they were doing what God required of them, they were growing better. That the more diligent they were in their impenitent endeavours, the more safely might they rely upon God's converting them. Therefore of course the further they proceeded in this way, the less knowledge would they have of themselves, their danger, and their deserts; and the more certainly would they grieve away the Spirit of God.

Sinner! instead of waiting and praying for God to change your heart, you should at once summon up your powers, put forth the effort, and change the governing preference of your mind. But here some one may ask, Can the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, change itself: I have already said that this text in the original reads, "The minding of the flesh is enmity against God." This minding of the flesh, then, is a choice or preference to gratify the flesh. Now it is indeed absurd to say, that a choice can change itself; but it is not absurd to say, that the agent who exercises this choice, can change it. The sinner that minds the flesh, can change his mind, and mind God.

14th. From this subject it is manifest that the sinner's obligation to make to himself a new heart, is infinite.Sinner! your obligations to love God is equal to the excellence of his character, and your guilt in not obeying him is of course equal to your obligation. You cannot therefore for an hour or a moment defer obedience to the commandment in the text, without deserving eternal damnation.

15th. You see it is most reasonable to expect sinners, if they are converted at all, to be converted under the voice of the living preacher, or while the truth is held up in al its blaze before the mind.An idea has prevailed in the church, that sinners must have a season of protracted conviction, and that those conversions that were sudden were of a suspicious character. But certainly "this persuasion cometh not from God." We nowhere in the Bible read of cases of lengthened conviction. Peter was not afraid on the day of Pentecost that his hearers had not conviction enough. He did not tell them to pray and labour for a more impressive sense of their guilt, and wait for the Spirit of God to change their hearts, but urged home their immediate duty upon them. If he had suffered them to escape, to go from under his voice while yet in their sins, it is probable that hundreds, if not thousands of them had not be converted at all. It is as reasonable and philosophical to expect the sinner to turn, if he does it at all, while listening to the arguments of the living preacher, as it is to expect a juror to be convinced, and make up his mind, under the arguments of the advocate. The advocate expects if they are convinced at all, that they will be so while he is addressing them. He does not act upon the absurd and preposterous supposition, that it is more likely they will be convinced and make up their verdict in his favour when they shall have retired, and calmly considered the subject. His object is so thoroughly to convince, so completely to imbue their minds with the subject, as to get their intellect, and conscience, and heart to embrace his views of the subject. This is wise, and verily, in this respect, "the children of this world, are in their generation wiser than the children of light." And now, sinner, if you go away without making up your mind, and changing your heart, it is most probable that your mind will be diverted -- you will forget many things that you have heard -- many of the motives and considerations that now press upon you may be abstracted from your mind -- you will lose the clear view of the subject that you now have -- may grieve the Spirit, defer repentance, and push your unbroken footsteps to the gates of hell.

16th. You see the importance of presenting those truths, and in such connexions and

relations, as are calculated to induce the sinner to change his heart.Few more mischievous sentiments have ever been broached, than that there is no philosophical connexion between means and end in the conversion of sinners; that there is no natural adaptedness in the motives of the Gospel to annihilate the sinner's selfishness, and lead him to submit to God. This idea is a part of the scheme of physical depravity. It considers regeneration as a change in the substance of the mind; as effected by the direct physical agency of the Spirit of God, irrespective of truth. If this were a correct view of regeneration, it would be manifest that there could be no connexion between the means and the end. For if the work be a physical creation, performed by the direct and physical power of the Holy Ghost, then certainly it is effected by no means whatever. But so far is this from truth, that no sinner ever was or ever will be converted, but by means wisely and philosophically adapted to this end.

The Spirit selects such considerations, at such times and under such circumstances, as are naturally calculated to disarm and confound the sinner; to strip him of his excuses, answer his cavils, humble his pride, and break his heart. The preacher should therefore acquaint himself with his refuges of lies, and as far as possible take into consideration his whole history, including his present views and state of mind; should wisely select a subject; so skillfully arrange, so simply and yet so powerfully present it, as to engage the sinner's whole attention, and then lay himself out to the utmost to bring him to yield upon the spot. He who deals with souls should study well the laws of mind, and carefully and prayerfully adapt his matter and his manner to the state and circumstances, views and feelings, in which he may find the sinner at the time. He should present that particular subject, in that connexion and in that manner, that shall have the greatest natural tendency to subdue the rebel at once. If men would act as wisely and as philosophically in attempting to make men Christians, as they do in attempting to sway mind upon other subjects; if they would suit their subject to the state of mind, conform "the action to the word and the word to the action," and press their subject with as much address, and warmth, and perseverance, as lawyers and statesmen do their addresses; the result would be the conversion of hundreds of thousands, and converts would be added to the Lord "like drops of the morning dew." Were the whole church and the whole ministry right upon this subject; had they right views, were they imbued with a right spirit, and would they "go forth with tears, bearing precious seed, they would soon reap the harvest of the whole earth, and return bearing their sheaves with them."

The importance of rightly understanding that God converts souls by motives, is inconceivably great. Those who do not recognize this truth in their practice at least, are more likely to hinder than to aid the Spirit in his work. Some have denied this truth in theory, but have happily admitted it in practice. They have prayed, and preached, and talked, as if they expected the Holy Spirit to convert sinners by the truth. In such cases, notwithstanding their theory, their practice was owned and blessed of God. But a want of attention to this truth in practice has been the source of much and ruinous error in the management of revivals and in dealing with anxious souls. Much of the preaching, conversation and exhortation have been irrelevant, perplexing and mystical. Sufficient pains have not been taken to avoid a diversion of public and individual attention. Sinners have been kept long under conviction, because their spiritual guides withheld those particular truths which at the time above all others they needed to know. They have been perplexed and confounded by abstract doctrines, metaphysical subtleties, absurd exhibitions of the sovereignty of God, inability, physical regeneration, and constitutional depravity, until the agonized mind, discouraged and mad from contradiction from the pulpit, and absurdity in conversation, dismissed the subject as altogether incomprehensible, and postponed the performance of duty as impossible.

17th. From this subject you may see the importance of pressing every argument, and every consideration, that can have any weight.And now, sinner, while the subject is before you, will you yield! To keep yourself away from under the motives of the Gospel, by neglecting church, and neglecting your Bible, will prove fatal to your soul. And to be careless when you do attend, or to hear with attention and refuse to make up your mind and yield, will be equally fatal. And now, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you at this time render your body and soul, a living sacrifice to God, which is your reasonable service." Let the truth take hold upon your conscience -- throw down your rebellious weapons -- give up your refuges of lies -- fix your mind steadfastly upon the world of considerations that should instantly decide you to close in with the offer of reconciliation while it now lies before you. Another moment's delay, and it may be too late for ever. The Spirit of God may depart from you -- the offer of life may be made no more, and this one more slighted offer of mercy may close up your account, and seal you over to all the horrors of eternal death. Hear, then, O sinner, I beseech you, and obey the word of the Lord -- "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?"

SERMON II.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR HEART.

-- Ezekiel xviii. 31.--
"Make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will ye die?"

This lecture was typed in by Liz Groman.

In the former discourse upon this text, I discussed three points, viz.

1. The meaning of the command in the text.

2. Its reasonableness.

3. Its consistency with those passages which declare a new heart to be the gift and work of God.

In answer to the first question, "what are we to understand by the requirement to make a new heart and a new spirit?" I endeavored to show negatively,

1st. What is not the meaning of the requirement. That it does not mean the fleshly heart, or that bodily organ which is the seat of animal life.

2dly. That it does not mean a new soul. Nor,

3dly. Are we required to create any new faculties of body or mind; nor to alter the constitutional powers, propensities, or susceptibilities of our

nature. Nor to implant any new principle, or taste, in the substance of either mind or body.

I endeavored to show that a change of heart is not that in which a sinner is passive, but that in which he is active. That the change is not physical, but moral. That it is the sinner's own act. That it consists in changing his mind, or disposition, in regard to the supreme object of pursuit. A change in the end at which he aims, and not merely in the means of obtaining his end. A change in the governing choice or preference of the mind. That it consists in preferring the glory of God, and the interests of his kingdom, to one's own happiness, and to every thing else. That it is a change from a state of selfishness in which a person prefers his own interest above every thing else, to that disinterested benevolence that prefers God's happiness and glory, and the interests of his kingdom, to his own private happiness.

Under the second head, I endeavored to establish the reasonableness of this duty, by showing the sinner's ability, and the reasons for its performance.

And under the third head, that there was no inconsistency between this and those passages which declared a new heart to be the gift and work of God.

I come now to a fourth inquiry, to which the discussion of the above named topics naturally leads, viz. How shall I perform this duty, and change my own heart? This is an inquiry often made by anxious sinners, when they are commanded to change their hearts, and convinced that it is their duty to do so, and of the dreadful consequences of neglecting to obey. They anxiously inquire, HOW SHALL I DO IT? By what process of thought or feeling is this great chancre to be wrought in my mind? The design of this discourse is to help you out of this dilemma; to remove, if possible, the darkness from your minds; to clear up what seems to you to be so mysterious; to hold the lamp of truth directly before you; to pour its blaze full upon your path, so that if you stumble and fall, your blood; shall be upon your own head.

I. HOW THE HEART CANNOT BE CHANGED.

- 1st. I observe, negatively, that you cannot change your heart by working your imagination and feelings into a state of excitement. Sinners are apt to suppose that great fears and terrors, great horrors of conscience, and the utmost stretch of excitement that the mind is capable of bearing, must necessarily precede a change of heart. They are led to this persuasion, by a knowledge of the fact, that such feelings do often precede this change. But, sinner, you should understand, that this highly excited state of feeling, these fears, and alarms, and horrors, are but the result of ignorance, or obstinacy, and sometimes of both. It often happens that sinners will not yield, and change their hearts, until the Spirit of God has driven them to extremity; until the thunders of Sinai have been rolled in their ears, and the lurid fires of hell have been made to flash in their faces. All this is no part of the work of making a new heart; but is the result of resistance to the performance of this duty. These terrors and alarms are, by no means essential to its performance, but are rather an embarrassment and a hinderance. To suppose that, because, in some instances, sinners have those horrors of conscience, and fears of hell before they would yield, [and] that, therefore, they are necessary, and that all sinners must experience them before they can change their hearts, is a as unwarrantable an inference as if all your children should maintain that they must necessarily be threatened with severe punishment, and see the rod uplifted, and thus be thrown into great consternation, before they can obey; because one of your children had been thus obstinate, and had refused obedience until driven to extremities. If you

are willing to do your duty when you are shown what it is, fears, and terrors, and great excitement of mind are wholly unnecessary: God has no delight in them for their own sake, and never (sic.) causes them only when driven to the necessity by pertinacious obstinacy. And when they are obstinate, God often sees it unwise to produce these great terrors, and will sooner let the sinner go to hell without them.

- 2. You cannot change your heart by an attempt to force yourself into a certain state of feeling. When sinners are called upon to repent, and give their hearts to God, it is common for them, if they undertake to perform this duty, to make an effort to feel emotions of love, repentance, and faith. They seem to think that all religion consists in highly excited emotions or feelings, and that these feelings can be bidden into existence by a direct effort of the will. They spend much time in prayer for certain feelings, and make many agonizing efforts to call into existence those highly wrought emotions and feelings of love to God of which they hear Christians speak. But these emotions can never be brought into existence by a direct effort to feel. They can never be caused to start into existence, and glow and burn in the mind at the direct bidding of the will. The will has no direct influence over the them [emotions], and can only bring them into existence through the medium of the attention. Feelings, or emotions, are dependent upon thought, and arise spontaneously in the mind when the thoughts are intensely occupied with their corresponding objects. Thought is under the direct control of the will. We can direct our attention and meditations to any subject, and the corresponding emotions will spontaneously arise in the mind. If a hated subject is under consideration, emotions of hatred are felt to arise. If an object of terror, of grief, or of joy, occupies the thoughts, their corresponding emotions will of course arise in the mind, and with a strength corresponding to the concentration and intensity of our thoughts upon that subject. Thus our feelings are only indirectly under the control of the will. They are sinful or holy only as they are thus indirectly bidden into existence by the will. Men often complain that they cannot control their feelings; they form overwhelming attachments, which they say they cannot control. They receive injuries - their anger arises - they profess that they cannot help it. Now, while the attention is occupied with dwelling upon the beloved object in the one case, the emotions, of which they complain, will exist of course; and if the emotion be disapproved of by the judgment and conscience, the subject must be dismissed from the thoughts, and the attention directed to some other subject, as the only possible way of ridding themselves of the emotion. So in the other case, the subject of the injury must be dismissed, and their thoughts occupied with other considerations, or emotions of hatred will continue to fester and rankle in their minds. "If a man look on a woman, to lust after her, he has committed adultery with her already in his heart;" he is responsible for the feelings consequent upon suffering such a subject to occupy his thoughts.

II. THE EXERCISE OF THE WILL, AND THE PLACE OF THE EMOTIONS IN MAKING A NEW HEART.

Voluntariness is indispensable to moral character; it is the universal and irresistible conviction of men, that an action, to be praise or blame-worthy, must be free. If, in passing through the streets, you should see a tile fall from a building upon which men were at work, and kill a man, and upon inquiry you found it to be the result of accident, you could not feel that there was any murder in the case. But if, on the contrary, you learnt that the tile was maliciously thrown upon the head of the deceased by one of the workmen, you could not resist the conviction that it was murder. So, if God, or any other being, should force a dagger into your hand, and force you against your will to stab your neighbor, the universal

conscience would condemn, not you, but him who forced you to this deed. So, any action, or thought, or feeling, to have moral character, must be directly or indirectly under the control of the will. If a man voluntarily place himself under such circumstances as to call wicked emotions into exercise, he is entirely responsible for them. If he place himself under circumstances where virtuous emotions are called forth, he is praiseworthy in the exercise of them, precisely in proportion to his voluntariness in bringing his mind into circumstances to cause their existence.

Love, repentance, and faith, may exist in the mind, either in the form of volition or emotion. Love, when existing in the form of volition, is a simple preference of the mind for God and the things of religion to every thing else. This preference may, and often does exist in the mind, so entirely separate from what is termed emotion, or feeling, that we may be entirely insensible to its existence. But although its existence may not be a matter of consciousness, by being felt, yet its influence over our conduct will be such as that the fact of its existence will in this way be manifest. The love of family and friends may, in like manner, exist in the mind in both these forms. When a man is engaged in business, or journeying from home, and his attention taken up with other subjects, he exercises no sensible or felt love for his family; but still his preference remains, and is the mainspring that directs his movements in the business about which he is engaged, in order to make provision for them. He does not forget his wife or family, nor act as if he had none; but, on the contrary, his conduct is modified and governed by this abiding, though insensible preference for them; while at the same time his thoughts are so entirely occupied with other things, that no emotion or feeling of affection exists in his mind.

But when the business of the day is past, and other objects cease to crowd upon his attention, this preference of home, of wife and family, comes forth and directs the thoughts to those beloved objects. No sooner are they thus bidden before the mind, than the corresponding emotions arise, and all the father and the husband are awake and felt to enkindle in his heart. So the Christian, when his thoughts are intensely occupied with business or study, may have no sensible emotions of love to God existing in his mind. Still, if a Christian, his preference for God will have its influence over all his conduct, he will neither act nor feel like an ungodly man under similar circumstances; he will not curse, nor swear, nor get drunk; he will not cheat, nor lie, nor act as if under the dominion of unmingled selfishness; but his preference for God will so modify and govern his deportment, that while he has no sensible or felt enjoyment of the presence of God, he is indirectly influenced in all his ways by a regard to his glory. And when the bustle of business is past, his abiding preference for God naturally directs his thoughts to him, and to the things of his kingdom; when, of course, corresponding feelings or emotions arise in his mind, and warm emotions of love enkindle, and glow, and happify the soul. He understands the declaration of the Psalmist, when he says, "While I mused the fire burned."

I said also, that repentance may exist in the mind, either in the form of an emotion or a volition. Repentance properly signifies a change of mind in regard to the nature of sin, and does not in its primary signification necessarily include the idea of sorrow. It is simply an act of will, rejecting sin, and choosing or preferring holiness. This is its form when existing as a volition. When existing as an emotion, it sometimes rises into a strong abhorrence of sin and love of holiness. It often melts away into ingenuous relentings of heart; in gushings of sorrow, and the strongest feelings of disapprobation and self- abhorrence in view of our own sins.

So faith may exist, simply as a settled conviction or persuasion of mind, of the truths of

revelation, and will have greater or less influence according to the strength and permanency of this persuasion. It is not evangelical faith, however, unless this persuasion be accompanied with the consent of the will to the truth believed. We often believe things to exist, the very existence of which is hateful to us. Devils and wicked men may have a strong conviction of the truth upon their minds, as we know they often do; and so strong is their persuasion of the truth, that they tremble; but still they hate the truth. But when the conviction of Gospel truth is accompanied with the consent of the will, or the mind's preference of it, it is evangelical faith, and in proportion to its strength will uniformly influence the conduct. But this is faith existing as a volition. When the objects of faith, revealed in the Gospel, are the subjects of intense thought, faith rises into emotion: it is then a felt confidence and trust, so sensible as to calm all the anxieties, and fears, and perturbations of the soul.

Emotions of love or hatred to God, that are not directly or indirectly produced by the will, have no moral character. A real Christian, under circumstances of strong temptation, may feel emotions of opposition to God rankling in his mind. If he has voluntarily placed himself under these circumstances of temptation, he is responsible for these emotions. If the subject that creates these emotions is forced upon him by Satan, or in any way against his will, he is not responsible for them. If he divert his attention, if he flee from the scene of temptation, if he does what belongs to him to resist and repress these emotions, he has not sinned. Such emotions are usually brought to exist in the mind of a Christian by some false view of the character or government of God. So emotions of love to God may exist in the mind that are purely selfish, they may arise out of a persuasion that God has a particular regard for us, or some vain assurance of our good estate and the certainty of our salvation, Now, if this love be not founded upon a preference for God for what he really is, it is not virtuous love. In this case, although the will may have indirectly produced these emotions, yet as the will prefers God, not for what he is, but for selfish reasons, the consequent emotions are selfish.

III. WHAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED IN ORDER TO CHANGE THE HEART.

To change your heart, as I have shown in the former discourse, and repeated in this, is to change the governing preference of your mind. What is needed, is, that your will should be rightly influenced, that you should reject sin, and prefer God and obedience to every thing else. The question is, then, how is your will to be thus influenced? By what process is it reasonable to expect thus to influence your mind? Until your will is right, it is vain to expect felt emotions of true love to God, of repentance and faith. These feelings, after which perhaps you are seeking, and into which you are trying to force yourself, need not be expected until the will is bowed, until the ruling preference of the mind is changed.

And here you ought to understand that there are three classes of motives that decide the will:

- First, those that are purely selfish. Selfishness is the preference of one's own interest and happiness to God and his glory. Whenever the will chooses, directly or indirectly, under the influence of selfishness, the choice is sinful, for all selfishness is sin,

- A second class of motives that influence the will, are those that arise from self-love. Self- love is a constitutional dread of misery and love of happiness, and whenever the will is influenced purely by considerations of this kind, its decisions either have no moral character at all, or they are sinful. The constitutional desire of happiness and dread of misery is not in itself sinful, and the consent of the will to lawfully gratify this constitutional love of happiness and dread of misery is not sinful. But when the will

consents, as in the case of Adam and Eve, to a prohibited indulgence, it then becomes sinful.

- A third class of motives that influence the will, are connected with conscience. Conscience is the judgment which the mind forms of the moral qualities of actions. When the will is decided by the voice of conscience, or a regard to right, its decisions are virtuous. When the mind chooses at the bidding of principle, then, and only then, are its decisions according to the law of God.

The Bible never appeals to selfishness. It often addresses self-love, or the hopes and fears of men; because self-love, or a constitutional love of happiness, or dread of misery, is not in itself sinful. By thus appealing to the hopes, fears, and conscience, the mind, even of selfish beings, is led to such an investigation as to prepare the way for the enlightened and powerful remonstrances of conscience. Thus the investigation is carried on under the influence of these principles; but it is not the constitutional principle of self-love that finally determines the mind in its ultimate choice of obedience to God. When, under the combined influence of hope, fear, and conscience, the mind has been led to the full investigation and consideration of the claims of God, - when these principles have influenced the mind so far as to admit and cherish the influences of the Holy Spirit, as that it becomes enlightened, and is led to see what duty is, the mind is then ripe for a decision; conscience then has firm footing; it then has the opportunity of exerting its greatest power upon the will. And if the will decide virtuously, the attention is not at the instant occupied either with hopes or fears, or with those considerations that excite them. But at the moment when the decision is made, the attention must be occupied either with the reasonableness, fitness and propriety of its Maker's claims, or with the hatefulness of sin, or the stability of his truth. The decision of the will, or the change of preference is made, not mainly because, at the instant, you hope to be saved or fear to be damned, but because to act thus is right; [because] to obey God, to serve him, to honor him, and promote his glory, is reasonable, and right, and just. This is a virtuous decision: this is a change of heart. It is true, the offer of pardon and acceptance has a powerful influence, by more fully demonstrating the unreasonableness of rebellion against such a God. While in despair, the sinner would flee rather than submit. But the offer of reconciliation annihilates the influence of despair, and gives to conscience its utmost power.

- Fourthly, You cannot change your heart by attending to the present state of your feelings. It is very common when persons are called upon to change their hearts, for them to turn their thoughts upon themselves, to see whether they possess the requisite state of feeling; whether they have conviction enough, and whether they have those emotions which they suppose necessarily precede a change of heart. They abstract their attention from those considerations that are calculated to decide their will, and think of their present feelings. In this diversion of their mind from the motives to change their heart, and fixing their attention upon their present mental state, they inevitably lose what feeling they have, and for the time being render a change impossible. Our present feelings are subjects of consciousness, they have a felt existence in the mind; but if they be made, for a moment, the subject of attention, they cease to exist. While our thoughts are warmly engaged, and intensely occupied with

objects without ourselves, with our past sins, with the character or requirements of God, with the love or sufferings of the Savior, or with any other subjects, corresponding emotions will exist in our minds. But if from all these, we turn our attention to our present feelings and attempt to examine them, there is no longer any thing before the mind to make us feel; our emotions cease of course. While a man steadily looks at an object, its image is painted on the retina of his eye. Now, while he continues to direct his eye to the object, the image will remain upon the retina, and the corresponding impression will be upon his mind; but should he turn away his eye, the image upon the retina would no longer remain; and should he direct his attention to the mental impression instead of the object that caused it, the impression would at once be effaced from his mind.

Instead, therefore, of waiting for certain feelings, or making your present state of mind the subject of attention, please to abstract your thoughts from your present emotions, and give your undivided attention to some of the reasons for changing your heart.

IV. THINGS TO BE CONSIDERED TO INDUCE THE STATE OF MIND WHICH CONSTITUTES A CHANGE OF HEART.

Remember, the present object is, not to call directly into existence certain emotions, but, by leading your mind to a full understanding of your obligations, to induce you to yield to principle, and to choose what is right. If you will give your attention, I will try to place before you such considerations as are best calculated to induce the state of mind which constitutes a change of heart.

- 1. Fix your mind upon the unreasonableness and hatefulness of selfishness. Selfishness is the pursuit of one's own happiness as a supreme good; this is in itself inconsistent with the glory of God and the highest happiness of his kingdom. You must be sensible that you have always, directly or indirectly, aimed at promoting your own happiness in all that you have done; that God's glory and happiness, and the interests of his kingdom, have not been the leading motive of your life; that you have not served God, but have served yourself. But your individual happiness is of trifling importance, compared with the happiness and glory of God and the interests of his immense kingdom. To pursue, therefore, as a supreme good, your own happiness, is to prefer an infinitely less to an infinitely greater good, simply because it is your own. Is this virtue? Is this public spirit? Is this benevolence? Is this loving God supremely, or your neighbor as yourself? No, it is exalting your own happiness into the place of God; it is placing yourself as a center of the universe, and an attempt to cause God and all his creatures to revolve around you as your satellites.

  Your success, in pushing your selfish aims, would ruin the universe. A selfish being can never be happy until his selfishness be fully gratified. It is certain, therefore, that but one selfish being can be fully gratified. Selfishness aims at appropriating all good to self. Give a selfish man a township, and he covets a state; give him a state, and he longs for a nation; give him a continent, and he cannot rest without the world: give him a world, and he is wretched if there is nothing more to gain. Give him all authority on earth, and while there was a God to rule the universe, his selfish heart would rankle with insatiable desire, until the world, the

universe, and God himself were prostrate at his feet his ambition could not be satisfied, his selfish heart could not rest. If, then, you could succeed in your selfish aims, your success would subordinate and injure, if not ruin every body else.

Is this right? But could you succeed in subduing the universe to yourself, then your happiness would not be obtained; for a selfish moral agent cannot be happy. Could you ascend the throne of Jehovah; could you wield the scepter of universal government; could you appropriate to yourself the honor and the wealth of the entire universe; could you receive the homage, the obedience of God and all his creatures, yet the very elements of your nature would be outraged, and while in the exercise of selfishness, conscience would condemn you, the very laws of your moral constitution would mutiny; self- accusation and reproach would rankle in your heart, and, in spite of you, you would be forced to abhor yourself.

Again. While you are selfish, all moral beings must hate and despise you; and it is impossible for a moral being to be happy under the consciousness of being deservedly hated and despised. The love of approbation is a law of our nature, it is laid in the very constitution of the mind by the hand that formed it. It is, therefore, as impossible for us to be happy under the consciousness that we are deservedly hated, as it is that we should alter the very structure of our being. It is in vain, therefore, for you to expect to be happy in the exercise of selfishness. God, angels and saints, wicked men and devils, the entire universe of moral beings must be conscientiously and heartily opposed to you while you sustain that character - while conscience gives forth the verdict that you deserve their hatred, and pronounces you unfit for any other world than hell.

- 2. Consider the guilt of selfishness.

In the next place, look at the guilt of this. No thanks to you, if there is a vestige of virtue or happiness in the universe. If your example should have its natural influence, and not be counteracted by God, it would, like a little leaven, leaven the whole lump. If all your acquaintances copied your example, and their acquaintances theirs, and so on, you can easily see that your influence would soon destroy all benevolence, and introduce universal selfishness and rebellion against God. No thanks to you, if there is an individual in the universe that respects the government of God. You have never obeyed it, and all your influences have been against it; and if God had not been constantly wakeful in using counteracting influences, his government had long since been demolished, and virtue and obedience, and love to God and man had been banished from the world.

Again, your influence has tended to establish for ever the dominion of Satan over men. Selfishness is the law of Satan's empire. You have hitherto perfectly obeyed it; and as example preaches louder than precept, you have used the most powerful means possible to induce all mankind to obey the devil. If God has a virtuous subject on earth, if all men are not in league with hell, and, by their example at least, shouting forth, "O Satan, live for ever!" no thanks to you, for the legitimate tendency of your

conduct had been to produce this horrible result.

Again, no thanks to you, if all mankind are not for ever lost. You have done nothing to save them. Your whole life has had a natural tendency to destroy them. Your neglect and contempt of God have exerted the strongest influence within your power to lead them in the way to death. You have done nothing to save yourself, and, by neglecting your own soul, you have virtually said to all around you, your family and friends, to all who are near and afar off "let religion alone," "who is the Lord that we should obey him, or what profit should we have should we pray unto him?" You need not thank yourself, nor expect the thanks of God, nor of the universe, if any soul from earth is ever saved.

Now, look at the guilt of this. The guilt of any action is equal to the evils which it has a natural tendency to produce. Now look at this. Your selfishness has the natural, and, if unrestrained, the inevitable tendency to ruin the world, to destroy God's government, to establish Satan's, and to people hell with all mankind.

- 3. Consider the reasonableness and utility of benevolence (to love your neighbor as yourself).

Next, look at the reasonableness and utility of benevolence. Benevolence is good will. Benevolence to God, is preferring his happiness and glory to all created good. Benevolence to men, is the exercise of the same regard to, and desire for their happiness, as we have for our own. Benevolence to God, or the preference of God's happiness and glory, is right in itself, because his happiness and glory are infinitely the greatest good in the universe. He prefers his own happiness and glory to every thing else, not because they are his own, but because they constitute the greatest good. All beings, when compared with him, are less than nothing, and vanity. His capacity for enjoying happiness or enduring pain is infinite, not only in duration but in degree. If all the creatures in the universe were completely happy, or perfectly miserable to all eternity, their happiness or misery, though endless in duration, would be but finite in degree. But God's happiness is not only endless in duration but infinite in degree. His happiness is, therefore, just as much more valuable than that of all his creatures, as infinite exceeds finite. Then, is it not right - is it not according to the moral fitness of things, that all his creatures should value his happiness and glory infinitely above their own? Is it not right that he should do this, not because it is his own happiness, but because it is an infinitely greater good?

Does not moral fitness, does not the eternal law of right demand, that he should regard his own happiness according to its real value? Has he any right to prefer the happiness of his creatures above his own? Does not justice require that he should regard every thing in the universe according to its relative importance? and should he not regard his own happiness and glory infinitely above all things else; and should he not require all his intelligent creatures to do the same; would it not be a manifest departure from the immutable principles of right? Therefore, to have a supreme

regard to your own happiness, to value it, and to desire it more than you do the happiness and glory of God, is to trample upon the eternal principles of justice and moral fitness which God is bound to maintain; to array yourself in the attitude of open and outrageous war against God, against the universe, against heaven, against the principles of your own nature, and against whatever is right, whatever is lovely and of good report.

Again. That you should love your neighbor as yourself is agreeable to the immutable law of right. That you should regard your neighbor's happiness according to its real value, and the happiness of all mankind according to the relative importance of each one's individual happiness, and the happiness of the whole as much above your own as the aggregate amount of theirs is more valuable than yours, is right in itself. To refuse to do this, is at once to sin against God, to declare war with all men.

But again look at the utility of benevolence. It is a matter of human consciousness that the mind is so constituted that benevolent affections are the source of happiness, and malevolent ones the source of misery. God's happiness consists in his benevolence. Wherever unmingled benevolence is, there is peace. If perfect benevolence reigned throughout the universe, universal happiness would be the inevitable result. The happiness of heaven is perfect, because benevolence is there perfect. They love God with all their heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and their neighbors as themselves; and who that knows the joy there is in holy love, does not know that the full tide of benevolence is but another name for the full tide of happiness? Perfect benevolence to God and man would at once give us a share in all the happiness of earth and heaven. Benevolence is good will, or willing good to the object of it. If we desire the happiness of others, their happiness will increase our own, according to the strength of our desire. If we desire their welfare as much as we do our own, we are made as happy by good, known to be conferred on them as upon ourselves; and nothing but selfishness prevents our tasting the cup of every man's happiness, and sharing equally with him in all his joys. If we supremely desire the happiness and glory of God, the fact that he is infinitely and immutably happy and glorious, and that he will glorify himself, and that "the whole earth shall be full of his glory," will constitute our supreme joy. It will be to us a never failing source of pure, and high, and holy blessedness. And when we look abroad upon men, and see all the wickedness of earth; when, through the page of inspiration, we survey as with a telescope the deep caverns of the pit; when we listen to its wailings, and behold the lurid flashes of its fires, and contemplate the gnawings of the deathless worm; in all this we see only the legitimate results of selfishness. Selfishness is the discord of the soul: it is the jarring. and dissonance, and grating of hell's eternal anguish. Benevolence, on the other hand, is the melody of the soul. In its exercise, all the mental powers are harmonized, and breathe the sweetness of heaven's charming symphonies. To be happy, then, you must be benevolent. Selfishness, you see, is neither reasonable nor profitable. Its very nature is at war with happiness. It renders you odious to God, the abhorrence of heaven, the contempt of hell. It buries your good name, your ultimate self- esteem, your present and future happiness, in one common grave, and that beyond the hope of resurrection, unless you turn, renounce

your selfishness, and obey the law of God.

- 4. Consider the reasons why God should govern the universe.

But again, consider the reasons why God should govern the universe. Perhaps, in words or in theory, you have never denied his right to govern, yet in practice you have always denied it. Your having never obeyed, is the strongest possible declaration of your denial of his right to govern you. The language of your conduct has been, "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey him?" "I know not Jehovah, neither will I obey his voice." But have you duly considered his claims upon your obedience? Have you not only admitted the fact that he has a right to govern, but have you understood and thoroughly considered the foundation of this right? If you have never attended to this, it is not wonderful that you have refused obedience. The foundation of God's right to the government of the universe is made up of the three following considerations:

First, his moral character. His benevolence is infinite. Were he a malevolent being, and were his laws like himself, as they would be of course, he could have no right to govern. Instead of being under an obligation to love and obey him, it would be our duty to hate and disobey him. But his benevolence renders him worthy of our love and obedience. But his benevolence alone cannot qualify him for, nor give him a right to, the government of the universe. However benevolent he may be, if his natural attributes are not what they should be, he cannot be qualified to be the Supreme Ruler of all worlds. But a glance at his natural attributes will show that he is no less worthy to govern, in respect to these, than in respect to his moral attributes.

And, first, he has infinite knowledge, so that his benevolence will always be wisely exercised.

2nd. He has infinite power. However benevolent he might be, if he lacked either knowledge to direct, or power to execute his benevolent desires, he would not be fit to govern.

Again. He is omnipresent; in every place, at every time; so that nothing that benevolence desires, wisdom directs, or power can achieve, can be wanting in his administration.

Again. He is immortal and unchangeable. Could he cease to exist, or were he subject to change, these would be fundamental defects in his nature as supreme Ruler of the universe.

But, again. Neither his moral nor natural attributes, when viewed separately or collectively, afford sufficient ground for his assuming the reins of government. For however good and great he may be, these constitute no sufficient reason for his taking upon himself the office of supreme

magistrate, irrespective of the elective choice of other beings. But he is also the Creator, and holds by the highest possible tenure the entire universe as his own. Thus he is not only infinitely well fitted to govern, but by creation has the absolute and inalienable right to govern. He not only has this right, but it is his duty to govern. He can never yield this office, nor throw aside this responsibility.

- 5. Consider the reasonableness of God's requirements.

But again. Look at the reasonableness of his requirements. They are not arbitrary but such as it is his bounden duty to enforce. The laws of God have not their foundation in his arbitrary will, but in the nature, and relation, and fitness of things. To love God and our neighbor, is not our duty simply because God requires it; but it is our duty antecedently to any expressed requirement. He requires it, because it is right in itself. He is not therefore at liberty to dispense with our obedience if he please. He cannot good-naturedly humor his creatures and let them have their own way - let them run into sin and rebellion, and then let them go unpunished. He is solemnly pledged and bound by the rules of his own government. If, therefore, you go on in sin, it is not at his option, when you come to the judgment, to punish you or not. The laws of his empire are fixed, eternal principles, which he can no more violate, without sin, than any of his creatures. Do not hope then, if you persevere in sin, to escape "the damnation of hell."

But perhaps, like many others, you have made this excuse for your rebellion; that, upon the whole, God desires you to sin; that, as he is almighty, he could prevent sin if he pleased; and because he does not, you infer that he prefers the existence of sin to its non-existence; and the present amount of rebellion to holiness in its stead. To say nothing of his word and oath upon this subject, you have only to look into his law to see that he has done all that the nature of the case admitted, to prevent the existence of sin. The sanctions of his law are absolutely infinite; in them he has embodied and held forth the highest possible motives to obedience. His law is moral, and not physical; a government of motive, and not of force. It is vain to talk of his omnipotence preventing sin; if infinite motives will not prevent it, it cannot be prevented under a moral government, and to maintain the contrary is absurd, and a contradiction. To administer moral laws, is not the object of physical power. To maintain, therefore, that the physical omnipotence of God can prevent sin, is to talk nonsense. If to govern mind were the same as to govern matter - if to sway the intellectual could be accomplished by the same power that sways the physical universe, then, indeed, it would be just, from the physical omnipotence of God, and from the existence of sin, to infer that God prefers its existence to holiness in its stead. But as mind must be governed by moral power, as the power of motive is the only power that can be brought to bear upon mind to influence it, it is unjust, unphilosophical, illogical, and absurd, to infer from the existence of sin, and God's physical omnipotence, his preference of its existence.

If the motives to obedience are infinite, well might he challenge the universe, and inquire, "what more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done?" And will you, in the face of all these moving considerations, continue your rebellion? and when required to turn, will you profanely reply: If God be Almighty, why does he not turn me? O, sinner, why provoke your Maker? "Your judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not."

- 6. Consider the atonement.

But, again. When the law was broken, and all mankind exposed to its fearful penalty, behold at once the justice to the universe, and mercy to sinners displayed in the atonement. To make an universal offer of pardon, without regard to public justice, were virtually to repeal his law; but a due regard to the public interest forbade the lawgiver to forgive and set aside the execution, without some expedient to secure a veneration [love] for and obedience to the precept [law]. So great, therefore, was his compassion for man, and his regard to law, that to gratify his desire to pardon, he was willing to suffer in the person of his Son, a substitute for its penalty. This was the most stupendous exhibition of self- denial that ever was made in the universe. The Father giving his only begotten and well beloved Son; the Son veiling the glories of his uncreated Godhead, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that we might never die.

Now, if you are an impenitent sinner, you have never, in a single instance, obeyed your Maker. Every breath that you have breathed, every pulse you have told [of your heart], has but added to the number of your crimes. When God has fanned your heaving lungs, you have breathed out your poisonous breath in rebellion against the eternal God; and how ought God to feel towards you? You have set your unsanctified feet upon the principles of eternal righteousness; you have lifted up your hands, filled with poisoned weapons, against the throne of the Almighty; you have set at nought the authority of God and the rights of man. You have spurned, as with your feet, every principle of right, of love, and of rational happiness. You are the enemy of God, the foe of man, a child of the devil, and in league with hell. Ought not God then to hate you with all his heart?

But in the midst of your rebellion, behold the long suffering of God. With what patience has he borne with all your aggravated wickedness! All this you have done, and he has kept silence. Dare you think that he will never reprove?

- 7. Consider the required conditions of repentance and faith.

But look for a moment at the conditions of the Gospel, Repentance and faith. To repent, is to hate and renounce your sin. This requirement is not arbitrary on the part of God. It would neither be just to the universe, nor beneficial to you, to exercise pardon until you comply with this requirement. Can a sovereign forgive his subjects while they remain in rebellion? Can God forgive you while you persevere in sin? No. This would be to give up his law, and, by a public act, to confess himself wrong and you right, to renounce the stand he has taken, to condemn himself and

justify you. But this would be the publication of falsehood, it would be a proclamation that sin is right and holiness wrong. Not only so, but to forgive you, and leave you in your sin, would render your happiness impossible. You might as well proclaim a man in health who is dying with the plague.

Nor is faith an arbitrary appointment of God. God has no means of getting you to heaven unless you believe his word, and walk in the path he points out to you. If you will not believe What he tells you of heaven and hell, of the way to avoid the one and gain the other, your salvation is impossible in the nature of the case. You cannot find heaven at the end of the road that leads to hell, nor hell at the end of the road that leads to heaven, and nothing but faith in what he tells you, can influence you to take the path that leads to heaven. And now, sinner, what have you to say? Why the sentence of his law should not be executed upon you? You have never cared for God, and why should he be under obligation to care for you? You have never obeyed him, what good then do you deserve at his hand? You have always disobeyed him, and what evil do you not deserve? You have broken his law, despised his grace, and grieved his Spirit. "You have cast off fear and restrained prayer." The tendency of your selfish conduct has been to ruin the universe, to dethrone God, to build up the throne and establish the dominion of Satan, to damn yourself and all mankind. This you cannot deny. Let conscience pass sentence upon you. Let it give forth its verdict. Do you not, even now, hear it in the deep recesses of your soul cry out, guilty, guilty, and worthy of eternal death?

- 8. The rightful conclusion to these considerations.

But, sinner, you have seen, in the progress of this discourse, the reasonableness of benevolence, and the hatefulness of selfishness. The right and the duty of God to govern you, and your obligations to obey. You have seen the reasonableness and utility of virtue; the unreasonableness, the guilt, and evil of sin. And now what say you? What is your present duty? Is it right? Is it reasonable? Is it expedient longer to pursue your selfish course? Is it not best, and right, and manly, and honorable, and time, to turn and obey your Maker? Look at the consequences of your present course, to yourself, your friends over whom you have influence, to the church, and to the world. Will you continue to cast firebrands, arrows, and death, - to throw all your influence, your time and talents, your body and soul, into the scale of selfishness! Shall all your influence continue to be upon the wrong side, to increase the wickedness and misery of earth, to gratify the devil and grieve the Son of God? Sinner, if you go to hell, you ought to be willing to go alone; company will not mitigate, but increase your pain. Ought you not then, instantly, to throw all your influence into the other scale; to exert yourself to roll back the tide of death, and save your fellow- men from hell? Do you see the reasonableness of this? What is your judgment in the case? Do not stop to look at your emotions, nor turn your eye in upon your present state of mind; but say, will you cease your rebellion, throw down your weapons, and enlist in the service of Jesus Christ? He has come to destroy the works of the devil, to demolish his empire, and re- establish the government of God in the hearts of men. Are

you willing that he should govern the world? Is this your choice? If allowed to vote, would you elect him as supreme Governor of the world? Will you obey him yourself? But do you reply, "Oh! I am so great a sinner, I fear there is no mercy for me?" That is not the question. The question is not, whether he will pardon you, but whether you will obey him. If he saw it not wise to pardon you, if the circumstances of his government require your damnation, is it not on that account the less your duty to obey him. The question for you to settle is, whether you will obey him, and leave the question [matter] of your salvation for him to settle, in view of all the circumstances of the case. He is infinitely wise, and as benevolent as he is wise. You ought, therefore, cheerfully to submit your final destiny to him, to make your duty the object of your attention, and obedience your constant aim. The atonement is full and perfect. The presumption is, that nothing is in the way of your salvation but your impenitence and unbelief; and indeed you have the promise, that on condition of submission to his will, you shall have eternal life. Do you see what you ought to do, and are you willing to do it? "Choose this day whom you will serve." To choose God and his services - to prefer these to your own interest and to every thing else, is to change your heart. Have you done it? Do you still ask, how shall I do it? You might with much more propriety ask, when the meeting is dismissed, how shall I go home? To go home would require two things, first, to be willing; secondly, to put your body in motion. But here, no muscular power is needed. But one thing is requisite, that is a willing mind. Your consent is all that is needed. Be willing to do your duty, [and do it,] and the work is done.

INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

1. From this subject you see why many complain that they cannot submit to God. They do not give their attention to the consideration necessary to lead them to submission. Many occupy their thoughts with their state of feeling, are looking steadily at the darkness of their own minds and the hardness of their own hearts. They are anxiously waiting for the existence of certain feelings in their minds, which they suppose must precede conversion. In this way they will not submit of course. Their mental eye is turned away from the reasons for submission. In this state of mind it is impossible that they should submit; it would be a counteraction of all the laws of mind. Others, instead of attending to the reasonableness and fitness of their Maker's claims, give their whole attention to their own danger, and try to submit while they are only influenced by fear. This is acting under the influence of self-love. It is not responding to the voice of conscience; it is not submission to the laws of right; and, actuated by such motives, the mind may struggle till the day of judgment, and still the considerations that must lead the soul to a right submission are not before the mind, and the soul will not submit. It is the rightness of the duty, and not the danger consequent upon the non- performance of it, that must influence the mind, if it would act virtuously. I have already said, that both hope and fear bear an important part in leading the mind to make the requisite investigation. But neither the one nor the other are the object of the mind's attention at the instant of submission. He, therefore, who does not understand the philosophy of this - who does not understand the use and power of attention, the use and power of conscience, and upon what to fix his mind to lead him to a right decision, will naturally complain that he does not know how to submit.

2. You see the way in which the Spirit of God operates in the conversion of men; it is

through the medium of attention and conscience; he gets and keeps the attention of the mind, and, through the influence of hope, and, fear, and conscience, conducts the sinner along the path of truth, till he has given conscience the requisite information to exert its utmost power; that when it gives forth its verdict, the will may respond. - Amen.

3. This is the experience of every Christian. He knows that in this way the Spirit of God exerted its influence to change his heart. His errors and refuges of lies were swept away. He can tell you that his attention was arrested and fixed, that his conscience was enlightened, and the subject pressed upon his mind until he was induced to yield.

4. You see how unphilosophical it is, while pressing the sinner to submission, to divert his mind and turn his attention to the subject of the Spirit's influence. While his attention is directed to that subject, his submission is impossible. He can only submit when his entire attention is directed to the reasons for submission. Every diversion of his attention is but multiplying obstacles in his way. Hence we never find the inspired writers, when calling upon sinners to repent, directing their attention to the subject of divine influence. Begin with Joshua - when he assembled the people of Israel and laid their duty before them, and said, "choose you this day whom ye will serve," he did not unphilosophically remind them at the same time of their dependence upon the Spirit of God; but held the single point upon which they were to choose before them, till their choice was made. So on the day of Pentecost, and in the case of the jailer, and indeed in every other case where prophets, and Christ, find the apostles called men to immediate repentance, we and them keeping close to their text, and not going off to drag in the subject of divine influence to divert the attention and confound their hearers.

5. You see the importance of understanding the philosophy of conversion, and why it is that so many sermons are lost, and worse than lost, upon the souls of men. First, the sinner's attention is not secured; and, secondly, if it is secured, it is often directed to irrelevant matters, and the subject embarrassed with extraneous considerations that have nothing to do with the sinner's immediate duty. Often the subject is not cleared up to his mind; or if he understands it, he does not see its personal application to himself; or if he sees this, he is not made to feel the pressure of present obligation, and not infrequently - `O tell it not in Gath, ' the impression is distinctly left upon his mind that he is unable to do his duty. The preaching that leaves this last impression is infinitely worse than none.

6. From this subject you can see that there are two classes of evidence of a change of heart; one is, those vivid emotions of love to God, repentance for sin, and faith in Christ, that often follow the change of choice. These constitute happiness, they are most sought, and usually the most depended upon, but not deservedly the most satisfactory. Highly wrought emotions are liable to deceive, for, as they cannot be the subject of a present distinct examination without ceasing to exist, they are the least to be depended on as an evidence of a title to the inheritance of the saints in light. The other kind of evidence is an habitual disposition to obey the requirements of God; that abiding preference of God's glory, over every thing else, that gives a right direction to all our conduct.

7. You see, from this subject, the philosophy of self- examination. Many persons will set apart days of fasting and prayer, and spend the day in trying to examine their present mental state, in trying to catch a glimpse of their present emotions. In this way they are sure to quench whatever of right feeling they have. Their past thoughts and feelings, their past actions and motives, may be the subject of present examination and attention; but whenever they make their present emotions or state of feeling the subject of attention, they cease to

feel. If, then, you would try your hearts in regard to any object, bring that object before your mind, consider it intensely, and if there be any moral affinity between your state of mind and this object of attention, while you are musing the fire of emotion will burn.

8. From this subject you perceive the error of those persons who suppose themselves to have much more religion than others, merely because they have more emotion. Multitudes of minds seem not to be influenced by principle, but are carried hither and thither by every gust of feeling, by whatever consideration these feelings may be produced; and while they tell of their raptures, their love and joys, they have so little regard to principle as to be guilty of Christ- dishonoring conduct. Others, who much less frequently evince deep emotion, are influenced by a sacred regard to right. They have much more of the consistency of the Christian character, but perhaps complain of the absence of religious joy.

9. From what has been said, it is manifest, that where sinners continue to neglect the means of grace, their case is hopeless. Many seem to think, that if they are to be saved, they shall be saved, and if they are to be lost, they shall be lost; and look upon religion as some mysterious thing, for the implantation of which, in their minds, they must wait the pleasure of a sovereign God. They pay attention to every other subject, and occupy their thoughts with every thing that is calculated to banish religion from their minds, and still hope to be converted. This is as irrational as if a man, desiring to obtain the perfection of Christian sobriety, should continue to riot and drink, and stupefy his powers, and expect that, in some mysterious way, he should by and by become a sober man.

10. From this subject you see the importance of giving a convicted sinner right instruction. Great care should be taken not to divert his mind from fundamental truths. His attention should be abstracted, if possible, from every thing irrelevant, from every thing that regards merely the circumstantials of religion, and brought to bear intensely upon the main question, that of unconditional submission to God.

11. You see the necessity of addressing the feelings, or hopes and fears of men, as a means of awakening them, and securing their attention. Very exciting means are often indispensable, to awaken and secure sufficient attention to lead the way to conversion. When there are so many exciting topics almost continually before the mind, so many Lo! heres, and Lo! theres, to call and fix the sinner's thoughts to worldly objects, we must, of necessity, ply him with the most moving considerations, and that in the most affectionate and earnest manner, or we shall fail to interest his thoughts, and get the subject upon his mind for consideration. One important design of his constitutional susceptibilities is, to afford a medium of access to the attention, and through the attention to the conscience. Many persons seem averse to addressing the feelings of men on the subject of religion, they fear to excite animal feeling, and consequently they in general excite no feeling at all. The reason is obviously this; they overlook some of the most striking peculiarities of the mental constitution. They strive to arouse the conscience, but fail for want of attention. The attention will not ordinarily be secured but by addressing the hopes and fears of men.

12. We should carefully distinguish between a convicted and an awakened sinner. When the sinner is once thoroughly awakened, there is then no need of creating further alarm; and indeed in this situation all appeals merely to hope and fear are rather an embarrassment and a hinderance to the progress of the work. When his attention is thoroughly secured, the favorable moment should be seized upon fully to enlighten his mind, and lead him to a right understanding of his responsibilities and the claims of his Maker. If there is any flagging of the attention, such appeals should instantly be made to the feelings as to arouse and fix the

thoughts; and an anxious watchfulness should be constantly kept up to preserve attention, and enlighten the mind as fast as possible. In this way you will most effectually aid the operations of the Holy Spirit, push matters to an issue, and secure the conversion of the sinner to God.

Neglecting to distinguish between awakening and conviction has been the cause of many sad failures in securing sound conversions. Often, when sinners have been merely awakened, they have been treated as if they were convicted: their spiritual guides have neglected to seize the opportunity to force home conviction upon them; they have called on them to submit, before they duly understood the reasons for submission, or the nature of the duty. But, as might be expected, instead of truly performing it, they have imagined themselves willing to do so, till their awakenings have subsided, and the chill apathy of death has settled down upon them.

13. You see that preaching terror alone is not calculated to effect the conversion of sinners. It is useful to awaken, but, unless accompanied with those instructions that enlighten, will seldom result in any good.

14. You see why those that preach alone to the hopes of men, seldom, if ever, effect their conversion. Some go to one extreme and some to the other. Some appeal to fear, and others again to hope, while they seldom reason with the sinner of temperance, of righteousness, or of a judgment to come. They often excite much feeling and many tears; but, after all, such appeals, unaccompanied with that discriminating instruction which the sinner needs, in regard to his duty and the claims of his Maker, will seldom result in a sound conversion.

15. You see the philosophy of special efforts to promote revivals of religion. Why it is that protracted meetings, and other measures which are new, are calculated to promote the conversion of sinners. Their novelty excites and fixes attention. Their being continued from day to day, serves to enlighten the mind, and has a philosophical tendency to issue in conversion.

Lastly. I remark, that from this subject it will be seen that a death- bed is but a poor place for repentance. Many are expecting, that if they neglect repentance until they come upon a bed of death, that then they shall repent and give their hearts to God. But alas! how vain the hope! In the langour and exhaustion, the pain and distraction, the trembling and the anxiety of a death-bed, what opportunity or power is there for that fixedness and intensity of attention that are requisite to break the power of selfishness and change the entire current of the soul? To think, is labor; to think intensely, is exhausting labor, even to a man in health. But, oh! upon a bed of death, to have the intricate accounts of life to look over, the subject of the soul's character and destiny to ponder and understand; to hold the agonized mind in warm and distressing contact with the great truths of revelation, until the heart is melted and broken, rest assured, is ordinarily, if not always, too great an effort for a dying man. Be it known to all men, that, as a general truth, to which there are but few exceptions, men die as they live, and no dependence can be placed upon those waverings, and flickerings, and gleamings forth of the struggling mind, while the body, all weakness and pain, is breaking down to usher it into the presence of its Maker. Now is your time, in the wakefulness and strength of your powers, while the command to make to you a new heart and a new spirit, and the reasons for the performance of this duty lie fully before you; while the gate of heaven stands open, and mercy, with bleeding hands, beckons you to come; while the pearl of great price is tendered to your acceptance, seize the present moment, and lay hold upon eternal life.

SERMON III.

TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS.

-- Matthew xv. 6.--
"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect, by your tradition."

This lecture was typed in by Carolyn Nelson.

The government which God exercises over the universe of mind is a moral government, it is not, of course, administered by direct physical agency; compelling mind to act, in the same manner, in which the physical laws of the material universe operate in the world of matter. Motives are the grand instruments of moving mind.

God's moral government is made up of considerations, and inducements designed and calculated to influence the minds of in-telligent creatures, to pursue that course of conduct, which will in the highest manner, promote the glory of God, their own interest, and the happiness of the universe. It lays down a definite and perfect rule of feeling and of action. Its precept marks with the clear light of sun-beams, the exact course of duty. Its sanctions hold out on the one hand, all the blessedness of everlasting life; and on the other denounces against offenders, all the pains of everlasting death. Thus holding before the sinner's feet, the clear lamp of truth, and in its awful penalty, gathering around him on every hand, over his head, and beneath his feet, all the moving considerations that heaven, and earth, and hell can present, to hold his mind in an exact course of obedience. The law of God was clearly revealed to the Jews, but its power was often broken, its influence over mind paralyzed and destroyed, by a variety of oral traditions, which were handed down from one generation to another; which were held as of equal authority with the written law. They were often the corrupt glosses of the Jewish doctors, and not unfrequently mere-evasions of the spirit, and meaning of the written law. We have an instance of this, in the verses connected with the text.

The Jewish doctors had a tradition, that it was unlawful to eat without first washing their hands. To this tradition, Christ's disciples paid no regard. But as these traditions were held in great veneration by the multitude, the Scribes and Pharisees, made the disciples' misregard of them the occasion of reproaching Christ, and demanded of him "why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the Elders?" Christ rebuked them by answering, "why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? for God commanded, saying, honour thy father and mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death; but ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or mother, it is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me, and honoureth not his father and mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition." The commandment to honour the father and mother, included the duty of providing for them, in case they were in necessitous circumstances; but the tradition of the elders evaded this requirement, and taught, that if the child would give his property to God, or dedicated it to religious purposes, and made no provision for his aged parents he was blameless. Thus, by this evasion, nullifying the requirement, and absolutely setting aside the commandment of

God.

It has always been the policy of Satan, since the world began, to break the power of moral government over mind; to introduce confusion, rebellion, and damnation, into the universe of God.

The influence of motive over mind, is in some respects analogous to the law of gravitation in the material universe. It does not indeed operate by physical force, as does the law of gravitation; but still, motive is designed to hold the same place in the world of mind, that gravitation holds in the world of matter. And as in the material universe, universal desolation would be the consequence of breaking the power of gravitation; so in the world of mind. Destroy the power of motive and universal anarchy, and misrule, will fill the universe. Every thing therefore which tends to hide the truth, to becloud the minds of men in ignorance, to give them erroneous notions of duty, and of the requirements of God; all evasions and misrepresentations of the true nature and tendency of his commands, are calculated to make them void, to subvert their tendency, and to defeat the very object for which they were enacted. Thus the corrupt glosses, and traditional evasions of the Jews had entirely blinded the Jewish nation. Their carnal interpretation of the law, their traditional explanations of the prophets, and of the commandments of God, had so shaped and modified the views, and doctrinal sentiments of the nation, that they had entirely misapprehended the nature and design of the Messiah's kingdom which they had so long expected. Notwithstanding the typical sacrifices of the ceremonial law, and all the institutions that were designed to point out the nature, and design of the advent of Christ; still these traditional delusions had been so great, and their expectations and views of what the Messiah would be, were so entirely erroneous, that when he came, they did not know him; his doctrine they considered as heresy, his claims to the Messiahship, as blasphemous. Hence the nation rose up, and rejected, and persecuted, and murdered him. But after his resurrection, and the pouring out of his Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the traditions of the Jewish doctors were discarded by the Christian Church. For a short time, the clear, unadulterated truth of God shone upon the world. Its power was instantly manifested. When separated from error, it poured its steady lustre in upon the darkness of the moral world, like the mid-day sun. Converts to Christianity were multiplied, as drops of the morning dew. Judaism gave way before it; the multiform systems of pagan idolatry shrunk away before its glories; and earth caught and echoed back the hallelujahs of heaven. But in the midst of this bright day, and while some of the inspired penmen were yet alive, the corrupt philosophy of men, began to introduce new traditions to break the power of truth. Men began to interpret the Scriptures by the corrupt standards of the erroneous philosophy. The truth became obscured, its power was broken, its influence over mind less and less manifest; until a day of darkness came, which spread the pall of midnight over ages of the world's history, and peopled hell with millions of our race.

When it was seen that the gospel had lost its power, instead of ascribing it to the fact that it was corrupted, that human glosses, and the traditions of men, had broken its influence over mind; instead of understanding that the various manifest inconsistencies with which their traditions had encumbered it, had palsied the arm of its power, and blighted the prospects of the church, they went on with their speculations, sat quietly down and very learnedly endeavoured to account for the fact that its glory was departed, by ascribing it to the mysterious sovereignty of God.

These traditions became multiplied to an enormous extent in the popish church, until such a thing as true conversion to God was hardly known among them. Many of these traditions

were rejected by the reformers, and light enough broke in upon the world, once more to break its slumbers, and there is reason to believe, to bring many souls to Christ. But still the effects were limited. The reformation was but partial. The gospel had not yet its primitive effect. Something was manifestly wanting, to unbecloud the glorious sun of righteousness, that through the gospel, he might shine in his full strength.

The systems of mental philosophy that still prevailed, and by which standards, men were continually interpreting the word of God; introduced embarrassments and contradiction, mystery, and absurdity into the gospel; perplexed and confounded the human mind, and has to the present day clogged the chariot wheels of his mercy, and in a great measure, set aside, and destroyed the power of the commandment of God.

I will now mention a few of the most apparent designs of the moral law, together with some of the traditions and dogmas of men that have broken its power. The following are among the manifest designs of this law.

- 1. To exhibit the benevolence of God. A law is the expressed will of the lawgiver. It is a declaration of his disposition towards his subjects, embodying, and holding forth his real sentiments and feelings concerning them. It is the exact portraiture of his heart. We have only to look into the two great precepts that comprise the whole law and the prophets to learn that God is love. These two precepts enjoin pure and perfect love; supreme love to God, and the same love to our fellows as we bear to ourselves; this is a universal rule of right, for the government of his kingdom. Universal obedience to this law would of course result in universal happiness. Mind is so constituted, that benevolent affections are the sources of happiness. If the benevolence, therefore, which the law requires were universally exercised, and in the degree which the law prescribes, universal good-will, and peace, and joy would fill the earth.

  The justice of God is also strongly exhibited in this law. It requires of man, just that love towards himself which is reasonable and right; and just that perfect regard in heart and life to the welfare of our fellow-men, and nothing more nor less than is perfectly right.

- Another design of the moral law is to convince men of sin. This it does by putting in their hand a perfect rule of action; by holding strongly before their eyes, a pure moral mirror that reflects the exact moral character of every thought, word and deed. It is the rule by which every action must be measured;--the delicate scale of the sanctuary, in which every thought and affection must be weighed.

  Its design is also to promote humility. By comparing the life, thought and affections with this holy law, the sinner finds that all is wrong. On being weighed in this balance he finds himself wanting. His self-complacency is destroyed, and his pride is humbled.

- Another design of the law is to destroy self-righteousness, and to teach men their need of atonement, and a Saviour.

- A further design is to promote holiness and happiness among men. To show them the impossibility of being happy without being holy; and that without perfect holiness no man shall see the Lord. To press every where upon the hearts and consciences of men their obligation to universal and perfect benevolence; and to convict them of sin in

every instance in which they come short of it.

In short, it is manifestly designed and calculated to declare the perfection of God, and the total depravity of man. For as it is a faithful portrait of the perfection of God's moral character on the one hand; so it is a faithful witness of the entire depravity of man on the other.

But all these designs have been defeated in multitudes of instances by the traditions of men. Pharisees, both of the ancient and modern stamp, have defeated these designs, by virtually altering the precept. Some of them have made obedience to consist in mere outward conformity to the law of God, regardless of the state of the heart but the law principally regards the heart. It is the heart, or the design with which an action is performed, of which the law takes cognizance. It gives no credit for the outward action unless it proceed from a right design. It must be the promptings of love, that gives existence to the action. It must be at the bidding of holy principle that the action is performed to be recognized as virtue by the law of God. Does the man pray, or preach, or give alms to the poor, or read his bible, or go to church? unless these or any other actions are prompted by the love of God in the heart, they are not obedience, they are not virtue, for still the law thunders forth its claims, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself. No outward conduct then however sanctimonious or precise, is to be regarded as obedience to the law of God, unless it flow from love. It must be manifest, therefore, that to make outward morality constitute obedience to this law, is to defeat one of its principal designs. Instead of convicting of sin, it is calculated to foster pride. Instead of exhibiting the true character of God, it holds him forth merely as the promoter of cold, dry morality. Instead of making men humble, showing them their need of a Saviour, it leads to self-complacency; to stumble at the doctrine of atonement; to misunderstand, and reject the gospel.

It was this view of the moral law, so extensively embraced and promulgated by the Pharisees, that led the Jewish nation to reject and crucify the Saviour. They rejected the righteousness of God, and went about to establish their own righteousness, by an outward conformity to the law; and thus supposing themselves to yield obedience to the law, how should they understand the necessity of an atonement, the righteousness of Christ, and justification by faith alone. So it is with the Pharisees of the present day; overlooking the spirituality of God's law, and supposing their cold dry, outward morality to be good in the sight of God, and what the law requires; they wrap the filthy garments of their own righteousness about them, walk in the light of their own fire, warm themselves with sparks of their own kindling, and must lie down in sorrow.

Again there are others, who make the law of God of no effect, by regarding it simply as of a negative character, as designed to prohibit the outbreakings of positive selfishness, rather than as requiring the existence and practice of all positive benevolence and virtue. These, content themselves with declaiming against out-breaking sins, regarding the law, simply, as prohibitory, they employ themselves in resisting the tide of corruption as it flows from the deep fountain of the heart, without enjoining and insisting upon the positive character of the law, as requiring every creature of God to devote all his powers to his service and giving himself up to doing good and promoting the interest of Christ's kingdom.

The religion of these individuals, of course, corresponds with their view of the law. It is of a merely negative character; inasmuch as they do nothing very bad, as they abstain from

those outbreaking sins that would disgrace them in the eyes of men; they imagine themselves to be Christians. They are aware that they do not give themselves up to acts of benevolence, that they do not deny themselves, take up their cross daily and follow Christ; that they do not hold all their possessions as stewards, account their time and talents and all they have and are as belonging to Christ, and to be used only for his glory. They know that they effect little or no good in the world, but that they content themselves with doing nothing very bad. Now this imagination that this is true religion, and that they are Christians, is founded upon their sad and fundamental mistake of the nature of the law of God. Right views of the law, would annihilate these false hopes, would at once sweep away their refuge of lies, and bring them to a better acquaintance with God and with themselves. But it is manifest that much of what is called religion in the present age, is this spurious negative kind of piety, that contents itself with doing nothing openly wrong, without doing what is right. Ask such a professor whether he is doing any good, he will tell you no, not that he knows of--but that he is doing nothing very bad. Thus the high claims of the law are set aside, its design is perverted and the hypocrite rests quietly in his sins.

Again, the Antinomians make void the commandment of God, by setting it aside as a rule of action. Antinomian is a compound word signifying without law. The sect originated in the days of the apostles. Their peculiarity lies in supposing that the gospel was designed to release Christians from their obligation to obey the moral law, it grew out of a perversion of the doctrine of justification by faith. The Jewish doctors had taught that men were to be saved only by yielding a perfect outward conformity to the moral and ceremonial laws. In opposition to this, Paul taught, that by the works of the law, no flesh can be justified; for two reasons, first, because all men had broken the law already, and secondly, because no subsequent obedience however perfect, could make restitution for past disobedience. That all men are, therefore, already condemned by the law. Justification, in the New Testament, is synonimous with pardon and acceptance. The atonement of Christ, is therefore, the only ground of pardon, and those who are saved, are justified, solely, by faith in Christ, irrespective of any real righteousness of their own. This sentiment was soon perverted by the Antinomians who maintained that if men are justified by faith alone without the works of the law, that good works were unnecessary, that faith in Christ is substituted for obedience to the law of God; overlooking the fact, that without personal holiness no man shall see the Lord.

Multitudes of this sect, have existed in different ages of the world, and in almost all parts of the Church; they have not indeed always been known by this name, but thousands have and still do manifest their peculiarities of belief, and practice. They may in general be known by the fact, that when holiness of heart and life are strongly insisted on, they complain that they are not fed, that this is legal preaching, that it is not the gospel, but that it is going back to the law. They seem to entertain the vain imagination, that the gospel is designed to repeal the moral law; not only to set aside the execution of its penalty, in the case of believers in Christ; but also to discharge them from the obligation to obey the law, they render the commandment of no effect. They array Christ, and his gospel against the moral government of God, settle down in their self-righteousness, render it impossible for either law or gospel to sanctify them, and "utterly perish in their own corruption." For it is manifest, that if a person professing faith in Christ, do not live as holily and unblameably as if he expected to be saved by his works. In other words, if he is less strict in life, and indulges in more sin than if he were to be saved by the law, he is turning the grace of God into licentiousness, making Christ the minister of sin--perverting and abusing the gospel, and is virtually, and in heart, an Antinomian This is making the gospel a license to sin and to break the law, and thus Christ is set forth as the apologist for sin, as saving those who make his gospel the

ground of encouragement for committing those sins which they would not dare to commit did they depend upon their own obedience for justification.

Again, others make void the law of God, and render it of no effect, by denying its penalty. There are two kinds of Universalists, who hold traditions that nullify the power of moral government. The penalty of a law, is the motive held out by the lawgiver, to induce obedience to the precept; the greater the penalty, the more weighty, and influential is the motive to obedience. The less the penalty, the feebler, and the more inoperative are the motives. Destroy the penalty entirely, and you destroy all motive to obedience, except what is contained in the nature of the precept. If indeed the penalty is destroyed or taken away, it is no longer a law; it is a virtual repeal of the law, for the precept without a penalty is only advice, which may be received or rejected at pleasure.

The two kinds of Universalists, to which I have adverted, are, no hell-ites, and limitarians, or restorationists. The former maintain, that men neither deserve, nor receive, any other punishment for sin, than what they receive in this life. The latter, that there will be a limited punishment in a future world; that when they have been punished according to their sins, they will be translated from hell to heaven. Both sects, agreeing in the alleged fact, that all mankind will be saved. The no hell-ites set aside entirely the penalty of the law of God, and regard the sufferings of this life as the natural and only evil consequences of sin to man. The latter fritter away the penalty, and reduce it to an indefinable something, the amount or duration of which they do not pretend to know. If it be not eternal, however, it is but a finite, instead of an infinite sanction. However long it may be, if it has an end, it is infinitely less than eternal. If it be but temporary, it is infinitely less solemn, awful, impressive, commanding, and influential, than an eternal penalty.

The sanctions of moral law, I have said, are designed to hold the same place in the moral, that the law of gravitation does in the material world. The mode of their operation is not the same, for gravitation acts by force, it is the law of matter, and can only be administered by force. Moral law is the law of mind; its sanctions act not by force, but are designed and calculated, to secure a voluntary obedience; and as the law of gravitation holds the sun, moon, and planetary system in their stations and courses; so the motives of moral government are designed to preserve in their stations and in obedience, the voluntary agents under the government of God. Thus while the reality of the threatened penalty was kept steadily before the mind of Adam, he persevered in obedience; he stood like the stars and planets in their station, balanced by the universal law of gravitation. But as soon as his confidence in that was lost, he fell. Annihilate the law of gravitation, and suns, and moons, and planets, rushing form their orbits, would run lawless through the universe; universal disorder, and confusion would be the instantaneous consequence; wave after wave of desolation would roll over the universe of God. So Adam, standing at the head of moral beings, as it regards this world, stood fast, while the deep conviction of the threatened penalty weighed upon his mind. But, alas, in an evil hour, the penalty was doubted, and lost its influence; and like the sun rushing from his orbit, and filling the universe with dismay and death; so, he, as soon as the force of moral government was broken, rushed from the orbit of his obedience, and filled the world, with crimes, and groans, and desolation.

The Universalists, seem desirous to relieve the world of its anxieties, either by wholly denying or infinitely mitigating the penalty of the law of God. But it is most manifest that could they succeed in producing universal conviction of the truth of their sentiments, they would completely annihilate the power of moral government. Could they convince the world, that God never threatened men with eternal death; that the sufferings of this world

are all, or nearly all that sin deserves; that God never designed to punish in a future world; is this sentiment calculated to promote obedience to the law of God? As well might you say, that to take away the penalties of human laws is calculated to secure obedience to their precepts. Is annihilating the motives to obedience, calculated, as a matter of philosophy, to secure obedience? Suppose a statesman should go through the country, maintaining that penalties attached to laws were wholly unnecessary, that it was quite as well or better not to threaten men with evil in case of disobedience. That to exhibit the amiableness of virtue, the mildness and humanity of the government, was all that was required. That the penalty against murder was entirely unnecessary; and that the accusations of his own conscience, and the pains, and trouble, and distresses, that the remembrance of a crime would bring upon its perpetrator, were as much as the crime deserved: that to exhibit other penalties was wholly unnecessary, inexpedient, and unjust. Would he not be regarded as a madman, as a fit subject for bedlam? Would not every man regard his doctrine as dangerous, or, if innocent, only so, because it was incredible and ridiculous? Would he do the world a favour by persuading them to act upon this principle; to strike out the penalties of all their laws? Would he not rather be regarded as the common enemy of man, as aiming to open the flood-gates of iniquity, and inundate the world with crime.

It is a notorious fact that even the penalty of death is not in all cases sufficient to prevent the perpetration of murder; and is it philosophy, is it common sense, is it to be believed, is it possible, that to do away this penalty, or to mitigate its pain, or to substitute a less motive in its place, would be sufficient to prevent the crime? So it is seen to be a naked matter of fact, that the penalty of eternal death, does not, in those cases where it is admitted to be eternal, restrain from sin. This infinite penalty has not sufficient weight and power to counteract the selfishness of the human heart. And now by what mad logic of earth or hell, do these men arrive at the sage conclusion, that to do away this penalty, would have a tendency to promote obedience to God? It is in vain to say, that the excellence and blessedness of the precept, is a sufficient motive to secure obedience; this is not only contrary to fact, but contrary to all philosophy. It is admitted that there is a high and powerful motive, held out in the precept itself; the happiness of virtue is of itself a great inducement to be virtuous; but still this is only one part of the sanction of the law; from the nature of mind it is indispensable, not only that rewards to obedience should be offered, but that evil should be threatened to disobedience; and especially is this most manifest in a universe, where virtue is to be tested by temptation. Is it not certain, then, that could they succeed in establishing the doctrine of the old serpent, that the wicked shall not die; they would make the commandment of God of no effect, and introduce universal rebellion and misrule into the empire of Jehovah. If an infinite penalty does not sufficiently restrain the selfishness of the human heart; what delirious babble is it to say, that a finite one would do it. If the threatened pains of eternal death, be not sufficient to stay the overflowings of sin; shall the simple consideration of the pains of this short life, roll back the insurgent waves of rebellion against high heaven, and beget peace on earth, and good-will to men? It cannot be.

Will it here be said, that the penalty of eternal death, only appeals to the fears of men; that men cannot be frightened into obedience to God? The truth is, that both fear and hope, are innate in the human mind, and are both implanted there as principles upon which moral government can act. Self-love, or the love of happiness, and dread of misery, differs entirely in its nature from selfishness. To these, to both hope and fear, both law and gospel continually make their appeals.

- We have before us a striking illustration of the death-blow given by Universalist sentiments to the law of God. Their preaching universal salvation never makes men holier and better; never convinces of sin and promotes revivals of religion; never

engages men in prayer, and effort for the enlightening of the world, and the salvation of immortal souls. Who ever knew the law of God, robbed of its penalty as exhibited by the Universalists, to reform a drunkard, rebuke and reclaim a debauchee; to bring the high-handed sinner upon his knees, and humble him as a little child. Who has not seen a case of this kind. A member of an orthodox church had been a praying man; attended church, was sober, honest, virtuous, and apparently religious. But by-and-by, he absented himself from the meetings for prayer, next he fled the sanctuary on the Sabbath; on inquiry, it was found that he neglected prayer in his family; on further search it was found he drank too much; he began to doubt whether there was an eternal hell; and on being excommunicated he became a Universalist.

Now who ever saw the reverse of this? A Universalist, a man of prayer? of sober, prayerful, religious life, who attended Universalist prayer meetings, and tried to promote revivals of religious among them, who kept up family, and closet prayer, to by-and-by relax in his exertions, grow cold in zeal, neglect their prayer meetings, stay away from the house of God, drink too much, embrace the sentiment of an eternal hell, and on being excommunicated from the Universalists, join the orthodox? I say who ever saw this? not one. There is no tendency in their sentiments to reform mankind. This is plain in philosophy, and abundantly established by facts. They may exhibit their traditions till the day of judgment, and so far from promoting holiness among men, they will only open the flood-gates of iniquity.

- But 2dly. The GOSPEL has been made of no effect by the traditions of men. This has been done by overlooking its two-fold design.

It is designed first to establish the law. It lays down the same rule of action, requires the same holiness of heart and life, and aims at restoring men to perfect obedience to the moral law. It does not abrogate or repeal the law, but enforces obedience, by exhibiting not only the original sanctions of the law, but by adding the peculiar, solemn, moving, melting ones of the gospel.

Its second design is, to provide a substitute for the execution of its penalty, to offer pardon on terms that are consistent with the honour of the moral governor, and calculated to promote the stability and influence of his government. To lose sight of either of these designs, is manifestly to render the gospel of no effect.

Some have viewed the gospel, as merely a system of mercy, as offering a pardon for sin, irrespective of its design and tendency to make men holy. They have talked, and preached and prayed about the mercy of God; they have exhibited it as a remedy, without convincing the sinner that he was diseased; have urged him to accept a pardon without convincing him of sin; and thus by overlooking the holiness which the gospel inculcates, and enjoins; exhibiting the pardon of the gospel without requiring its duties, they have made the gospel of no effect. The gospel, thus perverted, has no

tendency to save mankind, overlooking its morality, its mercy and its pardon can never save the souls of men; justification without sanctification, forgiveness without holiness, is not only absurd, but salvation upon such conditions is impossible. These, to be sure, lay great stress upon the atonement, admit the divinity of Jesus Christ, and exalt a dead faith even above obedience to the law of God. This class of professors may in general be known by their great zeal for what they term sound doctrine, and at the same time a manifest reluctance to hearing the self-denying duties of the gospel forcibly inculcated. The doctrines of God's sovereignty, the perseverance of the saints, and their kindred doctrines, are the only truth which they relish, and only a distorted and perverted view of these can feed them. They lay much more stress on doctrine than on that practice which it is the sole object of doctrine to produce. It is clear that they rest on the shadow and reject the substance. They are only hearers, but not doers of the word, deceiving their own selves, who shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

There is another tradition over and against this, that professes to recognize the morality of the gospel, but denies, and nullifies its most moving motives to obedience. They preach good works, but deny the power of faith, and the atonement of the Son of God. But here, the power of the gospel is as sadly marred as in the other case, professedly admitting its morality, but denying its sanctions, annihilates its power. The most moving motive of the gospel is presented in the doctrine of atonement. Blot out this, and the gospel has no power to save and reclaim, as facts abundantly testify. The fact is, that these parties, are at an equal remove from the truth. The one denies the morality, and the other rejects the leading motives, and thus the power of the blessed gospel is destroyed, and the abettors of both these systems are yet in their sins. That which admits the morality, but rejects the atonement, is a system of self-righteousness. While on the other hand that which admits the atonement, but overlooks the necessity of personal holiness, turns the grace of God into licentiousness.

- 3dly. Others have nullified and broken the power of the gospel by introducing traditions, having a direct tendency to prevent its being accepted. One of these is, the doctrine of physical depravity. This tradition inculcates that depravity is constitutional; that it enters into the very substance of the human soul. Something created in them. A natural appetite or craving for sin, like the appetite for food in the body.

Immediately attached to this, growing out of it, and founded upon it, is the tradition of inability on the part of the sinner to accept the gospel. These maintain that the sinner is not more able to embrace the gospel, than he is to make a world. Some of this class call on sinners to repent, but are careful to tell them they cannot repent: call on them to believe, but are sure to remind them that they are unable to believe: and thus as some have humourously and truly said, they preach

You can, and you can't.

You shall, and you shan't

You will, and you won't.

You'll be damned if you don't.

Tacked on to this, is the dogma of physical regeneration, another death dealing tradition of the elders. This is a necessary part of the same system, for if the nature itself be depraved; if depravity is constitutional, and something created with the mind itself; then regeneration must be physical. It must remedy the defect in the constitution. It must be the destroying of the constitutional craving for sin, and such an alteration of the powers of moral agency, as, to say the least, will render obedience, and holiness possible. Now it is clear, that no greater obstacles could be presented to the reception of the gospel than are found in these three dogmas just named viz. physical depravity, consequent inability and constitutional regeneration. They all lead inevitably, and logically to the exercise of a spirit of self-justification. A man has no right to blame himself for his depravity if it be constitutional. If it be something created in him, and born with him, the irresistible inference is, that it is something for which he is not to blame. If this notion of depravity be true, he must, and ought to justify himself. To repent of such depravity is impossible. A man might as well be called upon to repent of the colour of his skin, of the colour of his eyes, or for any of the bodily senses which he possesses. Nor if his depravity be constitutional, is it any more just, reasonable or possible for him to repent of his actual transgressions. If they are the natural results of a depraved and defective constitution, he is no more to blame for them, than for the effects of any bodily disease, with which he may be born. Now in what light must the gospel be regarded, that calls upon man to repent of constitutional depravity under pain of eternal death; and to complete the absurdity, and the insult, informs him at the same time, that he has no power to repent. To suspend salvation upon impossible conditions; at once insults his understanding and mocks his hopes. Is this the gospel of the blessed God? Impossible! It is a libel upon Almighty God!

But, another inevitable tendency of these traditions is, to lead those who embrace them, to adopt the waiting system. If he is really unable to obey God, of what use are his efforts; while he believes himself unable, he must regard it as of no use to try; efforts are idle, and worse than idle. That he must quietly wait for God to change his heart, is both the logical, and irresistible inference from such premises, and God alone is to blame for his continued impenitence.

Again, Universalism is another logical, and irresistible inference from these dogmas. Assuming as a fact, that men are constitutionally depraved, unable to obey the gospel, under the necessity of waiting for a physical regeneration, one must either adopt the conclusion that God is an infinite tyrant, or that all will be saved.

Again, these traditions have a manifest tendency to conduct a thinking mind into the regions of infidelity. What! exclaims a man of thought, am I

to believe that a book containing such absurdities as these, is from God. That God has made men sinners; incapable of serving him, suspended their salvation upon impossible conditions, made it indispensable that they should have a physical regeneration, and then damns them for being sinners, and for not complying with these impossible conditions, monstrous! blasphemous! Believe this who can! Thus having neither inclination, or perhaps time, for examining the Bible for himself, and hearing incessant changes rung upon these dogmas he becomes disgusted, and very naturally concludes that if these are the doctrines of the Bible, its religion is but a dream.

Once more. These dogmas, are calculated to beget and often have produced the most high handed and dreadful rebellion against Almighty God. Sinners, supposing these to be true, and supposing that God would damn them if they did not repent, and yet were unable to repent; that he had made them sinners; that their very nature was itself depraved, and for this depravity, they were exposed to, and threatened with eternal death: they have been led in many instances to curse him to his face. And what is wonderful, this very natural, and I must say, reasonable opposition, upon the assumption that these sentiments are true, has been dwelt upon by their abettors, as evidence of their truth.

Another, and the last tradition to which I shall call your attention at the present time, is what is generally called irresistible grace. This doctrine maintains that sinners are irresistibly converted; that if they are of the number of the elect, they will be converted in spite of themselves. By irresistible grace I understand and mean nothing more than that it is not, in those cases, resisted. But it has been maintained by some that it was properly irresistible. This is evidently a limb of physical regeneration. If that is true, this must be true also. But what is more calculated to quiet a man in his sins, than the idea of irresistible grace in regeneration. That do what he will; live as he will; resist as he will; still if he is to be converted, he will be irresistibly wrought upon, converted, and saved in spite of himself. I cannot conceive of a sentiment more directly calculated to break the power of the gospel, to strengthen the sinner's hands in his rebellion, and settle him quietly down upon his lees until he sinks to the depths of hell. It is believed that in millions of instances the traditions of physical or constitutional depravity, and inability, with their kindred errors, have led men very consistently to justify themselves, and condemn God. Hence when they have been called upon to repent, and believe the gospel, they have replied that they were willing and waiting God's time. The inference from their premises was irresistible, that they must wait, and consequently a compromise ensued; instead of calling upon him, and insisting upon his immediate repentance; instead of urging him to make to him a new heart and a new spirit, on pain of eternal death, he has been told to pray, to use the means, to call upon God for the influences of his spirit and wait for sovereign grace to change his heart. Thus when the sinner has felt straitened, and shut up to the faith, and ready to break down under the pressure of the requirement to repent and believe the gospel; his conscience has been relieved; the pressure of obligation mitigated, and the agonizing obligation to instant submission deferred. The sinner has found

his pains removed, his obligation to present duty postponed; he has turned away, in the use of means, quenched the Spirit, prayed himself to sleep, and sunk to the depths of hell.. And no wonder; for the requirements of God, are set aside, and another rule of duty substituted in its place. The requirement of the gospel is, repent now, and believe that your soul may live. It gives not the sinner a moment's time to wait; it presses upon him with all the weight of Jehovah's authority, instantly to ground his weapons, and submit to God. He feels hedged in, as with a wall of fire; he pants, and struggles, and is driven to extremity; he prays, but still the gospel cries repent and believe; he goes to church, and reads his Bible, and attends upon the means; but his conscience finds no relief, the commandment comes thundering upon his ear repent and believe the gospel. Whatever he does, or omits to do,--wherever he goes; the requirement still follows him, and increases his distress. But here comes in the charming, soothing opiate of inability. He meets some one, who tells him to use the means, that God is a sovereign, that he cannot repent himself; that he must not think to take the work out of the hands of God; that if he prays, and waits, at the gospel pool, he has no reason to be discouraged; that by-and-by, he has every reason to hope that God will change his heart. Ah, says the sinner; is it so. I feel relieved. I felt as if ten thousand voices were crying in my ears, repent, repent? And the more I prayed and used the means, the more guilty I felt: for I supposed that God required nothing less than absolute, and unconditional, and instantaneous submission. But I thank you for your comforting conversation. If this is all, to pray, and use the means, and wait God's time, I can do it without distraction. Thus another requirement being substituted for that of God, the power of the gospel is broken; and the commandment that was about to crush the sinner in the dust, that had hedged him in, and gave him no gleam of hope, but in instant submission is rendered of no effect by this tradition. The sinner breathes easier, feels relieved from the pressure of present obligation, drinks the lethean draught of the soul-killing poison, and goes down to hell.

If he believes himself in the performance of duty when in the use of means; the more industriously he uses the means, the less real conviction of sin he will have; if he supposes this is what is required of him; of course, while he is thus performing what he supposes to be duty, he must suppose himself to be growing better. The more he multiplies his impenitent prayers, and tears, and efforts: the more acceptable he must suppose himself to be to God. Thus his fears gradually subside; his good opinion of himself increases; his delusions deepen; and "while his judgment of a long time lingereth not, and his damnation slumbereth not;" he is gradually, but surely sinking into the slumbers of a stifled conscience; of a hardened heart; and about to cry peace and safety, until sudden destruction come upon him that he cannot escape.

INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

1. You see, from this subject, why some deny total depravity. The principal reasons are two. The first, is founded on inattention to the spirituality of God's law, confining their attention to the prohibitory applications of it, as contained in the ten commandments, and considering it as designed merely to restrain outbreaking sins; overlooking the absolute, positive

perfection that it enjoins, in thought, word, and deed, they in reality substitute another rule of conduct, in the place of the law of God. Thus comparing themselves with a false standard, they of course mistake their own character. Instead of closely weighing their thoughts, their affection, and all the movements of their minds, in the delicate scales of the sanctuary: instead of bringing all their heart and all their soul under the clear blaze of the law of God; they weigh themselves in the corrupt scale of their own imaginings, and sink down to death.

2. Another reason why men deny total depravity, is, that they cannot see how the constitutional powers of the mind should be in themselves sinful; nor how it is that a God of justice could make men with a nature in itself totally depraved. Nor can I. If this be what is meant by depravity, I not only deny total depravity, but in this view of it, all depravity.

3. You see why some see no need of an atonement for sin. They have entirely misunderstood the nature of God's law. This was the reason why the Scribes and Pharisees, seemed to have had no right notion of the necessity of an atonement. Their system was mere self-righteousness. They, therefore, esteemed the announcement of the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of his atonement, as blasphemous.

4. You see from this subject why the doctrines of grace, as they are called, lead to a pure morality. Some have regarded the doctrine of the vicarious sufferings of Jesus Christ, his making an atonement for sin, and making the conditions of salvation to be faith and repentance, as a dangerous doctrine, calculated to encourage men in iniquity, by holding out to them the hope of heaven, though they may continue to the last hour of their lives in rebellion against God. Thus, they look upon the doctrines of grace, as calculated to overthrow the very foundations of morality, and as highly prejudicial to the well-being of society. But the fact is, as all experience shows, that those who most cordially embrace the doctrines of grace, exhibit the purest morality. The reason is, they have right views of the spirituality of God's law; and notwithstanding they understand the conditions of the gospel to be repentance and faith; still they regard God's law, in all the length and breadth of its spirituality, as the rule of their lives. Upon this they keep their eye, as upon a pure mirror; in this they see their exact moral image; this leads them to watchfulness, to prayer, and to walking with God. And while the purity of its precepts annihilates every hope of being saved by their own works; they see and feel, that until they are perfectly conformed to the full length and breadth of its requirements, they never can be perfectly happy.

5. You see why those who reject the doctrine of the atonement, and depend upon their own works, and the general mercy of God for salvation, exhibit a spurious, and lax morality. The fact is, it is their loose and vague notions of the spirituality of God's law, which lies at the foundation of their rejecting the doctrine of atonement: and as their views of the rule of duty is defective; their morality will be in like manner defective.

6. You see from this subject, why it is that some professors of religion, when they are pressed up to holy living, their sins pointed out, and they are required to obey the law of God; cry out, this is not the gospel; this is preaching the law; tell us of the mercy of God; we want to hear about Christ, not about the law. The fact is, such persons are Antinomians. They regard the gospel simply as a system of pardon, and overlook the great design of its making them holy, and bringing them back to perfect obedience of the law of God.

7. From what has been said, we may understand, why it is, that for so many hundred years, the gospel has had so little influence over the minds of men. For many centuries, but little of the real gospel has been preached, that is, it has been so mixed with the traditions of men,

so much that is human, so much that is false, has been added to it, and intermingled with it, as to break its power. All the multitudinous errors, and false notions that have clustered around the doctrine of physical depravity, have every one of them served to shield the sinner form the arrows of the Almighty. Physical depravity, physical regeneration, the sinner's inability, and all their kindred errors, have formed so many hiding places, under which, millions upon millions have been entrenched, until the hail has swept away their refuges of lies, and the waters of Almighty wrath have overflowed their hiding places: and it is not to be doubted, that thousands of millions of our race are now groaning in hell, that might have been saved, but for these traditions of the elders that have made void the commandment of God. The design, and the tendency of the gospel, is, to bring men to immediate repentance. It lays upon them no requirement short of this. It never calls upon them to do any thing less than to repent, and obey the gospel. But men, holding, as many of them have, that sinners were unable to do this, have set them to do something else, which God never required at their hands, as a condition of salvation; and in doing which, they put off repentance sinned away their day of grace, and lost their souls. I have already observed that the gospel was early corrupted. These corruptions have continued in a greater or less degree, to mingle themselves with the pure gospel; and precisely in proportion as more or less error has been mingled with the truth, the gospel has been more or less successful. Its power depends on its purity.

8. Multitudes have preached the substance of the gospel, but the misfortune is, they have added to it something of their own. They have preached, and boldly called on men to repent, but before they left the pulpit, would be sure to admonish them that they had no power to obey. Suppose the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, when the alarmed Jews cried out, sirs, what shall we do to be saved; instead of saying, "repent every one of you," had said, you can't repent, you are dependent upon the spirit of God; you must pray, and use the means, and wait God's time. If the multitude had believed them, it is manifest that not one of them had been converted on the spot.

9. Again, the day of earth's redemption can never come, till the traditions of the elders are done away; till all those dogmas that afford hiding places for the enemies of God, are rejected as making no part of the gospel of Christ. When ministers of all denominations shall see eye to eye, shall disencumber the glorious gospel of all these traditions of men's devising; shall take the pure commandment of God, and bring it with an uncompromising spirit to bear with mountain weight upon the rebellious hearts of dying men; when they call on them instantly to repent, and treat them as if they expected them to repent; when they live, and labour, and pray, and preach, and exhibit the true gospel in all they say and do; then, and not till then, will the full power of God's moral government be felt on earth.

10. These traditions of the elders are the grand sources of most of the fatal errors of the present day. Universalism, as I have before remarked, has evidently had its origin in the notion of inability, and physical depravity. They have reasoned thus:--If men came into being with a depraved nature, physically and naturally inclined to all evil; if they are unable to obey God, as they really must be, if such is their nature; then surely a God of justice cannot damn them. Now this inference is irresistible from their premises. For God to make men physically incapable of obedience, and then damn them for disobedience, would be infinite tyranny and injustice. From the benevolence, and even upon the ground of the justice of God, upon the principles of physical depravity and inability, the arguments for Universalism are irresistible. Upon this hypothesis, they are right in rejecting, as most modern Universalists do, mercy from their system, and placing the salvation of men upon the ground of justice.

But take away the foundation, and the superstructure falls of course. Annihilate the dogma of physical depravity and inability; show the sinner that his depravity is a thing of his own creation; that his wicked heart is his voluntary selfishness, and the rejection of God and his commandments; that it is not for his nature, but for his conduct, that he is blamed; show him that what he calls his cannot, is his will not, and you destroy the very foundation upon which his Univeralism is built, you convince him of his sin, and shut him up to the faith of Christ.

11. Again, as I have before said from this subject, in the doctrine of physical depravity, and its kindred dogmas, you see the foundation of modern infidelity. Thinking men, hearing those doctrines, so often reiterated from the pulpit, become disgusted, when they hear men called upon to repent, and at the same time told that they cannot repent; when they hear the doctrine of the new birth, darkened by words without knowledge, when every thing is covered with mystery; the depravity of nature, the infusion of a new holy taste or principle; the mysterious and mystical nature of sin and holiness, of depravity and of regeneration; this confounding of mind and matter, of body and soul, of heaven, and earth, and hell; they look upon it as unphilosophical, ridiculous, absurd, and impossible; they turn away from such a loathsome exhibition of it, as something impossible for them to understand, and conclude that it is all a dream.

12. It is easy to see why revivals do not, and cannot prevail more extensively than they do. There is such a sticklishness on the part of many, for these crippling errors; such a constant effort to maintain these traditions of the elders, as to paralyze the influence of a great portion of the church. Many good men are halting and doubting whether they should reject them or not; and they are in that state of "betweenity," that they can heartily exhibit neither one thing nor the other. Many come out boldly, and strenuously, and hold up those dogmas, and while these are the topics continually held before the mind, it cannot be expected that revivals should prevail. It is true that men have had great and powerful revivals who have held and sometimes exhibited these views; but it was not when they exhibited them, that their preaching took effect. But when happily they were inconsistent enough to lay aside these peculiarities, and come out with the pressure of the gospel upon the hearts and consciences of men. Take a parable. A lady, who had been a long time under conviction, had often called on her minister, to know what she should do to be saved. He had as often reminded her of her helplessness, and dependence upon God; exhorted her to pray, and use the means, and wait patiently for God to change her heart. On the Sabbath, he would frequently call upon sinners to repent; but before he closed would be sure to caution them against self-confidence, depending upon their own strength; and would solemnly remind them that they had no power of themselves to repent and embrace the gospel. But one day, when this agonized woman was present, he happily forgot his accustomed inconsistency, and after pressing sinners to immediate repentance, sat down without the usual addition that they could not. Before the last hymn had concluded, the gospel had done its work in the woman's heart; and after the congregation was dismissed, she was observed to stand weeping and waiting as he passed out to speak with him. As soon as he came near enough she exclaimed, my dear Mr. ------- why did you not tell me of this before? Tell you of this before, replied the astonished pastor, why I have declared it to you every Sabbath. Yes, she replied, but always until now, you told me before you set down, that I could not repent. I hope, said the pastor, you have not gone on in your own strength; no she replied, not in my own, but in the strength of God I have repented, and should have done it before had you not told me that I could not. This is the legitimate tendency of cannotism; if they believe it, they certainly will not repent: and how can revivals prevail, how can the world be converted,

while so many are vehemently contending for these traditions of the elders. These dogmas, are exalted into fundamental doctrines, and they are supposed to be heretics, who do not keep these traditions. Well might Christ turn upon them with the rebuke, "wherefore do ye make void the commandment of God by your traditions." Oh! when will the day arrive, when the spurious philosophy upon which these dogmas are based, shall be given up? When unanimity of sentiment, and clearness of views, and brotherly love shall prevail? then will righteousness run down our streets, and salvation as an overflowing stream.

SERMON IV.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

-- John xv. 42.--
"But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."

This lecture was typed in by Lori Bigby.

These words were addressed by the Lord Jesus Christ, on a certain occasion, to those who professed that they loved God. I design, this morning, and in the afternoon, to establish the doctrine of total depravity.

In doing this,

I design, in the first place to show what the doctrine of total depravity, is not.

And secondly, what it is:

And thirdly, to prove the doctrine, according to the definition which I shall give of it.

And to conclude each discourse, with such remarks as shall appear appropriate, and necessary.

First. I am to show, what the doctrine of total depravity is not.

- 1. It does not consist in any want of faculties to obey God. We have all the powers of moral agency, that are needed to render perfect obedience to God. If there were any want of faculties, in our nature, our responsibility would cease; and we could not be justly blamed, for not doing that, for the performance of which, we do not possess the appropriate moral powers.

- 2. Total depravity does not consist, in a mutilated state of our moral powers. Neither our powers of body, or mind, are in a maimed, or mutilated state. If they were so, our obligation to obedience, would be diminished, precisely in proportion to the imperfection of the faculties or moral agency, which we possess.

- 3. Total depravity, does not consist, in any physical pollution transmitted from Adam, or from our ancestors, to us. It is impossible that moral depravity, should consist in physical pollution. Some persons have spoken of depravity, and of the pollutions of our nature, as if there were some moral depravity cleaving to, or incorporated with, the very substance of our being. Now this is to talk utter nonsense. If such a depravity were possible, it would not be moral, but physical depravity. It could not be a depravity for which we were blame-worthy. It could not be a sinful depravity. It would be a disease, and not a crime.

- 4. But again, total depravity, does not consist in any principle of sin, that is incorporated with our being. The word principle, is used in two senses. It sometimes means a property, or an attribute, of a substance, which has an inherent tendency to produce results agreeable to its nature. In this sense, depravity is not a principle, it is not a root, or sprout, or essence, or property, or attribute of any substance. It makes no part, either of body or mind. It does not belong to the constitution, but belongs purely, and exclusively to character: Moral depravity is a quality of voluntary action, and not of substance. If by principal, is meant purpose, preference, disposition, voluntary inclination to sin; then, in this sense, depravity is a principle; and in no other sense.

- 5. By total depravity, is not meant, that any being is, or can be, sinful, before he has exercised the powers of moral agency.

- 6. By total depravity, I do not mean, that there is any sin, in human beings, or in any other beings, separate from actual transgression.

  I do not mean, that there is some constitutional depravity, which lies back, and is the cause of actual transgression.

- 7. I do not mean, by total depravity, that there is the same disposition to sin, belonging to the substance of body or mind, that there is in a serpent to bite, or in a wolf to devour sheep. In other words, I do not mean, that there is a constitutional appetite, or craving for sin, implanted in the substance of the body or mind.

- 8. By total depravity, I do not mean, that men are as bad, as they can be, or as they might be, under other circumstances. If they were placed under circumstances, of less restraint, or of greater temptation, they would doubtless be worse than they are.

  When we say, that men are totally depraved, we are sometimes understood to affirm, that men are as bad as they can be. They seem to understand the word total, as signifying the highest possible degree of depravity. But certainly this is not the meaning of the word total. The sum total of 3 and 2 and 5 is 10. This is not the highest possible number, but is the total of 3. and 2. and 5. The same word when qualifying depravity, does not mean the highest possible degree of depravity, but simply, that the whole character is depraved; that there is no mixture of good in his character. Not, that he does and says, as wickedly as he could say and do; but that whatever he does and says, and is, is sinful. "That ever thought and imagination of his heart, is only evil continually."

Secondly. By total depravity, I do mean

- 1. That impenitent sinners, are universally destitute of love to God. My main business this morning, is, to establish this position, and conclude with several remarks. In the afternoon, if the Lord permit, I will further state what is meant by total depravity, and adduce the proofs, of the several positions, as I go along.

The text expressly asserts, that sinners have not the love of God in them. It would be easy, to show, that this same doctrine, is every where recognized, in the Bible. But as I am to deal with those, who I affirm to be totally depraved, I do not expect, that a thus saith the Lord will settle the question with you, and put it beyond debate.--You are unbelievers, and however you assent to the truth of the Bible, in general, yet I know, that you have no hearty confidence, in its doctrines in their detail: To prove to you, the doctrine of total depravity, from the Bible, only, may gain your unfeeling assent. But I am well aware, that this kind of evidence, will not so bring the subject home, to your experience, as to make you feel its truth. I might quote the text, and other passages of Scripture in proof of this doctrine, and then throw the responsibility upon you, of receiving or rejecting it. But as there is an exhaustless variety of other proofs within my reach, I will gather up a few of them, and lay them before you, for your consideration.

Facts, are stubborn things, and however men may evade the Bible, however they may turn away from, and misunderstand metaphysical reasonings; they find it difficult, to resist plain matters of fact; especially, when the facts exist in their own experience. I design to gather my proofs of this doctrine, from the experience of you, who are present. To point out certain facts, in your own history, and in the history of those around you, that will place this doctrine upon a foundation, not to be controverted.

The laws of mind, in their detail, are but imperfectly understood. Yet there are certain laws of mind, that are understood, even by children. They are facts of such universal and frequent experience, that we know with absolute certainty, that such are the laws of mind. For instance, by experience, we know it to be a law of mind, that we take delight in pleasing the object of our affection. To love an individual, is to desire his happiness. To promote his happiness, is to gratify that desire. To please the object of our affection, then is to please ourselves. To do that, which is pleasing to one whom we love; to add to his honor, or to his happiness, in any way; it to gratify our desire for his happiness; and naturally, and necessarily adds to our own happiness.

It is not essential that we should aim at gratifying ourselves, or at promoting our own happiness, in our efforts to please the object of our affections.

When we act virtuously, to please ourselves, is no part of our design. But although, not entering into our design, it is the natural result of pleasing an

object of our affection. It is the gratifying of our love, or desire to promote his happiness, or honor; and this gratifying of our desire, is of itself happiness. We find this principle, showing itself, in all the relations of life. When is the affectionate husband or wife, in a state of higher enjoyment, than when they are engaged in those employments, and in the performance of those offices, that contribute to each others happiness. When is the affectionate wife, more cheerful, than when busied in those things, that she knows will please her husband. How assiduous, and unwearied, are lovers, and other dear friends, in their efforts to please the object of their affection. How eager to anticipate each other's desires; how readily; how joyfully do they engage in those things, that they know will give pleasure to one whom they greatly love. It is absurd, and a contradiction for you to say that you love an individual, and have no delight in pleasing him. It is impossible, that you should love an individual, and not be gratified in promoting his happiness. To say, that you love a person, is the same as to say, that you desire his happiness, and to say that you can desire his happiness without delighting in promoting it, is the same as to say, that to gratify virtuous desire is not happiness. In other words, that the gratification of virtuous desire, is not a gratification.

This law of mind holds true, in all its fullness and extent, upon the subject of religion. I appeal to every Christian in this house, whether, to do the will of God, is not more than his necessary food; whether it is not your meat and drink to do the will of your Heavenly Father. When are you so happy, as when engaged in those things that you know will promote the honour and glory of God. I do not mean, or suppose, that it is your design to gratify yourself, when you obey and serve God; but I ask, do you not find it to be a matter of fact, that you are never so happy, as when you are engaged in doing those things that please him. You search his word, to know what will please him; and when you know his will, and engage heartily in the performance of it, the happiness you will experience in the performance of these duties may not enter into your design or thoughts; and yet you know, that as a matter of fact, the performance of duty promotes your own happiness. To please God, pleases yourself. And now, let me appeal to the experience of every impenitent sinner in this house: do you not know, that from the very constitution of your mind, you love to please your friends. And do you not know, that it makes no part of your happiness to please God. How you delight to gratify your children; to please the objects of your most endeared affection; but I ask your conscience, do you take delight in pleasing God? Do you study to know what will please him? And when you have learned his will, do you find yourselves inclined, readily and joyfully, to perform it?

How much pains you will take; at how much expense you will be; how watchful, assiduous, and persevering, not only in conforming the general outline of your conduct, to the wishes of one whom you greatly love; but in following out the minutia, into the detail; in fulfilling the slightest desires, and gratifying even the passing wishes of one upon whom your heart is set; and thus, giving yourself up, to promoting the happiness of the object of your affection, makes up, at once, the history and the substance, of your own happiness.

Now, sinner, is this your experience on the subject of religion? Do you love to please God? Is it your business? Is it your happiness? In other things, in regard to the affairs of this world, every thing you say or do, is viewed as having a relation to the object of your supreme affection. If you love money supremely, everything is judged of, is hated or loved, is desired or rejected, according to the relation it sustains to your own pecuniary interest. If you can make money by it, you have pleasure in it. If it would prevent the acquisition of wealth, you are displeased with it. So, if you have an earthly friend, whom you greatly love, it is natural for you to inquire, in every thing you say and do, how it will be received or looked upon by this object of your affection; what relation it sustains to him or her; and all your conduct is modified, and all your pursuits are regulated, by this controlling and absorbing affection for this idol. Now, sinner, I ask you again, is it true, in your own experience, that every thing pleases or displeases you; that you love or hate it; that you desire or reject it, according to its relation to the will of God; that if you see it will please him, it pleases you; if it is agreeable to his will, is it agreeable to your will? If it will promote his glory, do you desire it? If it will dishonour him, do you reject and abhor it? If not, why do you pretend to love God? You could not believe that your children or your wife loved you, unless you saw that they delighted to please you. And why should you deceive yourself, by supposing that you love God, when you know it is not your happiness to please him?

- Again, from the constitution of our minds, we delight in the society and conversation of those whom we greatly love. To commune with them is sweet. To be alone with them; to enjoy their confidence; to pour into each other's bosom the overflowings of our affections, constitutes some of the sweetest and most sacred of our joys. This law of mind shows itself, in all its strength, on the subject of religion.

Saints, in all ages of the world, have delighted to commune with God, having sought his society, and loved the retirement of the closet, where they can be alone with God; and never are they more supremely and sacredly happy, than when alone, in secret and holy communion with the blessed God. Now, sinner, is this your experience? Do you love to be alone with God? Do you delight to pray? Is it your most sacred, most endeared employment, to get alone, and low upon your knees, pour out your heart in communion with your God? I do not ask you whether you pray, for this you may do from a variety of motives, but is it because you love to pray? Because you love to be alone and commune with God? If you are an impenitent sinner, you know that you do not love the society of God.

- Again, we naturally prize the approbation of one whom we love. We account it of the greatest importance, and it is indispensable to our own happiness, that we should have the approbation of the object of our supreme affection. We are so constituted, that it gives us great pain to know that our conduct is disapproved of by our dearest friends. This is so in regard to our worldly friends, and it is so in regard to God. Nothing will wring a Christian's heart with more intolerable anguish, than the conviction, that his conduct merits the disapprobation of God; and this is not principally, and, in many cases, not at all, through fear of punishment. The Christian may have, and often does

have, the most thrilling and painful emotions, in view of his having merited and the disapprobation of God; while, at the same time, he is not distressed with fear of punishment. But he has offended God; he is ashamed, and cannot look up; he feels as an affectionate child or wife would feel, under the consciousness of having done what the parent or the husband highly disapproved.

The question naturally arises, and has a controlling influence over our lives, will this or that please or displease him or her whom I love. To gain the approbation of this object of affection, is our ambition, and our highest joy. Now, sinner, I appeal to you, is not this true, in your experience, as it respects him or her, who is the object of your greatest affection? And is it true, that you, above all things, prize the approbation of God? Is it your study? Is it your delight to gain his approbation? Does the consciousness of having done what he disapproves, wring your heart with anguish, irrespective of its consequences to yourself, and separate from all fear that you shall be punished? Do you feel the same emotions of sadness, of shame, of distress and sorrow, when you have merited the disapprobation of God, that you do when you have incurred the disapprobation of your most beloved earthly friend? I appeal to your own conscience, in the sight of God. Do you not know, that you do not supremely desire the approbation of God?

- Again, we naturally have reference to the feelings of the object of our supreme affections, in all our conduct. The affectionate husband or wife, parent or child, is careful not to wound the feelings of those they love; and if they find that they have wounded their feelings, they have no rest until they have confessed, and healed the wound, and are forgiven. This is true in religion. If you love God, you cannot reflect that you have wounded his feelings, without pain. You would not complain that you could not repent: The truth is, that if you were in the exercise of love to God, you could not help repenting, any more than an affectionate wife could refrain from grief, if she had wounded and grieved her husband.

- Again, we naturally love to think of the object of our affection. Every one knows how sweet it is to be alone, to meditate, to call up before the mind, and to dwell upon some absent object of our love. Thus lovers are apt to seek solitude, and there is a kind of sacredness thrown around those hours, when, in the stillness of our bed-chamber, or in the retirement of the lonely walk, we dwell in silent, but delightful musings, upon the character and person of him or her whom we fondly love. The deep hour of midnight will often witness the wakeful musings of a heart, which, in the sweetness of its own fond imaginings, is dwelling upon that beloved friend, who though absent, is at once the circumference and the all-absorbing center of its affections. These musings enkindle our affections into a flame. See that husband from home; he is a husband and a father; when the bustle of the day is over; when the distractions and cares of business have passed away; see his busy thoughts, going out and dwelling upon his absent wife; upon his little prattling babes, until his heart is all in aglow, and tears of unutterable affection fill his eyes. This is nature; and these laws of mind act with equal uniformity, when God is the object of supreme affection. The lone walk; the quiet bed-chamber; the hour of sacred retirement, are sweet to the Christian. He loves to send out his thoughts after God; to dwell upon his glories; look into the mysteries of his love; to think, and think, and meditate, and turn the subject of his glorious character, over and over before his mind, till his heart dissolves in love. Thus, the Psalmist says, "while I

was musing, the fire burned." Now, sinner, do you love to think of God? Do you delight to have God in all your thoughts? Do you seek solitude and retirement, that you say, unmolested, dwell upon him in your fondest, holiest musings? And when you think, and meditate, and pray, do you find in it a sweet, and tender, and all-satisfying happiness? Are you sensible of emotions of love to God, as strong, nay vastly stronger than those you exercise when thinking of your dearest earthly friend? I appeal to your own experience, and to your own conscience, in the sight of God.

- Again, we naturally delight in conversing about an object of our affections. It gives us pleasure to speak of one we love. It is gratifying to us, to let our lips speak out of the fulness of our hearts. Sometimes an affection is cherished, where there is some particular reason for concealing it; but even in those cases, a great affection is seldom cherished without being divulged, to some one. But where there is no reason for concealing it, we see how natural it is, to make the object of affection the subject of conversation. This law of mind manifests itself, as uniformly, on the subject of religion, as upon any other subject. It is a maxim in philosophy, as well as in morals, that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. You see a person whose heart is warm with the love of God; if God is in all his thoughts, He, and the interest of his kingdom, will be, in all his words. If his heart is set upon God, his lips will speak of God; unless he be under circumstances to require reserve, and then he will naturally remain silent, sooner than converse upon a subject upon which his heart is not set. If he is under circumstances, where he cannot consistently speak of God, he is inclined not to speak at all. Now, sinner, look at your own experience; do you love to converse about God? Is it delightful to you to speak of his character, of his person, and of his glory? I leave it with your conscience to decide.

- Again, we are pained when separated from those we love. Every body knows this is true, as it respects worldly friends; and it is true in a still higher sense, as it respects God. Every Christian knows, just what saints of old knew, that they cannot live, and have the least enjoyment, if they are far from God. If he hides his face, if the manifestations of his presence are withdrawn, alas, how mournful, and lonely, and sad, is the Christian, in the midst of all the gaiety and enjoyment of the world around him. Sinner, do you know what it is to feel as much pain, at the withdrawal of God's presence from you, as you do when separated from your dearest earthly friend? Do you feel lonely in the midst of company; sad in the midst of gaiety; away from home in the midst of all your worldly friends, if God's presence is withdrawn from you?

- Again, we naturally love the friends, of the object of our affection. We feel attached to them for his sake. We love to converse with them, and we seek their society, because their views and feelings, upon the subject that engrosses our attention, correspond with our own. Upon this principle, politicians, who are in favor of the same candidate, are fond of each other's society. And individuals, differing widely in other respects, enjoy each other's company, if they have one common and absorbing object of affection and conversation. Thus, Christians love to associate with each other. They love other Christians, because they love God. They delight in their society and conversation, because their views, and sentiments, and conversation, accord with their own. But, do sinners love the friends of God? Do you love Christians, because they are Christians? Do you delight in their conversation, and in their character, because they love God? You may love some of them for other reasons, and in spite of their religion; but it is not for their religion that you love them.

- Again, we naturally avoid the enemies of our friends. See that woman, is she intimate, and do you find her every day running in, and spending her time, in that family where they are enemies to her husband? Does she select as her friends and intimates, those that speak against her husband or her children? No, she naturally and instinctively avoids them. See that little child, he goes in to play with a neighbor's children; but while there, he hears them speaking against his father; he listens, and looks grieved and offended. He is a little one, and they do not notice him, but continue to vilify and abuse his father. He steals silently and sadly away, and goes weeping home; and hereafter you will perceive that he will avoid those persons as he would avoid a serpent. Just so with Christians; they naturally avoid the society of those that abuse God, unless they mingle with them to warn and save them. Sinners, very often imagine that Christians avoid them, because they feel above them; but this is not the fact. It is true, that some professors of religion do not delight in the society and fellowship of the saints, but manifest a preference for the company of the gay and ungodly. But this is demonstration that they are hypocrites, and is no exception to the uniform action, of this law of mind. "Know ye not, that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; he therefore, who will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God."

- Again, we are grieved, when our beloved friend is abused in our presence. It is amazing to see the blindness and stupidity of sinners upon this subject. When Christians manifest grief, at the wicked conduct of sinners, they ascribe it all to superstition. If the pious father or mother manifest grief, when an impenitent son or daughter is engaged in sin, and rebellion against God, they imagine that it is all superstition, and say, they have forgotten that they were ever young. See that husband, when he breaks the Sabbath, and swears, and abuses God, his wife weeps, and leaves the room. He says, his wife is very superstitious; is a great bigot; is under the influence of priestcraft. He wonders that she should concern herself about him; he shall do well enough; he can take care of himself. He does not seem, at all, to understand the principle upon which his wickedness affects her. See here, man; suppose you are sitting in your house, with your wife, and an enemy comes in, and begins to abuse you in her presence, and when he had heaped numberless vile epithets upon you, he looks and your wife is in tears; and now he says, what ails you woman? You must be very superstitious. What affects you so? What would you think of such questions? Could you see no reasons why his abuse of you distressed your wife? Would you not think it strange if he did not understand the reason of her tears? Now, your wife is a Christian, you disobey and abuse God in her presence, and she expostulates and weeps, and you wonder at it, and call it superstition. Turn over the leaf; suppose , when this man, of whom I have been speaking, abuses you to your face, your wife manifests no emotions of grief, nor of indignation; but on the contrary, upon casting a glance at her, you perceive her conniving at it, and appearing evidently pleased with it. What! a wife pleased to see her husband abused, you would from that moment, set her down as a hypocrite. You would not, you could not believe that she loved you. Now, the same holds true, where God is the object of affection. When God is abused, in the presence of his friends, they feel emotions of grief, and of indignation, as a thing of course; and this is the reason why the society of impenitent sinners is so disagreeable to a spiritual Christian. It is not because he feels above you, sinner, but because your conduct is a grief to him. When Christians mingle with sinners, it is upon business, or for the purpose of doing them good. Not because they can have any delight in their impenitent characters, or conversation, while they are the enemies of God.

I ask you, sinner, whether you are grieved with those that disobey God? Whether you feel mingled emotions of grief and indignation; as if your wife, or dearest friends were abused in your presence? Does it pain you, even to agony, to hear men swear in the streets; to see them break the Sabbath; and trample on God's holy commandments? Should you go through the streets and bear execrations, and abuses poured upon your dearest earthly friend, from every quarter, it would fill you with grief and indignation unutterable. And can you walk the streets, and hear God's holy name profaned; see his Sabbath desecrated; hosts of impenitent sinners, trampling, with unsanctified feet, upon his high and holy authority, and not be grieved? Then you are a hardened, and shameless hypocrite, if you pretend to love your Maker.

- Again, we are naturally credulous, and pleased, if we hear any good of one whom we love. It is a well known fact, that it is comparatively easy to believe, what we desire to believe. And we can believe in accordance with our feelings, upon slight testimony. A man will believe, what he wants to believe, almost against testimony. If the thing accord with our desires, we are not inclined to question the validity of the testimony, by which the desired fact is established. We witness the developments of this law of mind, in the transactions of every day. So on the subject of religion; when Christians hear of the conversion of any one, or of a remarkable revival of religoin; or of any thing else, that glorifies God; they manifest a readiness to believe it, because it so accords with their desires. But do impenitent sinners show that they love God, that their hearts are set upon his glory, and the interests of his kingdom, by manifesting a readiness to believe what they hear, in favour of religion? Let your conscience speak.

- Again, we love to see means used, to promote the interest and happiness of those we love. If we greatly love an individual, we delight in those who honour him, and try to promote his interest. We are not apt to be very particular and sticklish about the means that are used to promote this object, if they are but successful. We most naturally embrace, and most cordially use those means that promise the highest success. Witness the conduct of politicians; see how wise, industrious, and energetic they are, in devising, and executing means to elect their favourite candidate. You do not hear them stop, and cavil, and criticize, and find fault with any measure, merely because it is new. If it is not wicked, and if it promises success, its being new or old, will not be a sufficient objection to its being used if it bids fair to accomplish their favourite object. So with Christians, whose hearts are set upon promoting the glory and honour of god. They are on the alert; are looking out and devising new means of effecting their favourite object. They are industrious, and energetic in finding out new ways, and adopting new expedients, to bring about the salvation of the world. But do sinners apply their minds to this subject, and show that they are interested in the glory of God? Are they planning and devising liberal things for Zion? Are they finding out new and more successful methods of promoting the glory of God, and the salvation of men? Do you, sinner, feel rejoiced when some new measure is introduced, which has a tendency to promote this great work? Do you hail it, as one of the means by which the great object is to be accomplished, upon which your heart is supremely set.

- Again, it is difficult for us to believe an evil report of one whom we love. Go, and tell that affectionate wife, of some disgraceful conduct of her husband. Go, tell that mother, of the dissolute and abandoned conduct of her only son; do you find them ready and willing to believe these reports? Do they believe them without question? No, but they

will sift the testimony, criticise, and scrutinize, and perhaps no weight of evidence that you can bring to bear upon them, will thoroughly convince them of the facts. What lawyer is there, who has not seen the difficulty of convincing a juror, against his will? If the juror strongly desires that the testimony of a witness should not be true, what a slight appearance of inconsistency, will cause him to give his testimony all to the winds. This law of mind develops itself, with equal uniformity, upon the subject of religion. Go, and report among warm hearted Christians, a story, whether true or false; which, if true, is dishonorable to God, and injurious to the interests of his kingdom. See, how instantly, they will ask for your authority; scrutinize and sift the testimony; and you need not expect them to believe, unless it come upon them with the force of demonstration. But do sinners manifest this unwillingness to believe evil reports of religion? Should you hear an evil report, concerning the family of some near friend of yours; should you hear that one of the sons had greatly disgraced his father, who was your intimate and most beloved friend; would vague report satisfy you? Would the mere say so, of some irresponsible individual be considered by you as sufficient proof to command your belief of the report? No, you would ask for high and unquestionable authority, and even then, you would say, I can hardly believe it. Now, sinner, When you hear any scandalous report, of any deacon or minister, or any other professed child of God, do you find yourself instantly resisting the report? Do you find yourself inclined to call for further proof; to sift and criticise the testimony; to weigh, and scrutinize, and give the report to the winds, as false and slanderous, if you find discrepancy or absurdity in it? Do you feel the inward risings of indignation, and your thoughts and feelings taking the attitude of strong repellency, when such a God-dishonoring report is in circulation? Do you feel, when such stories are reported about Christians, as you would about slander that was uttered against your wife, or dearest earthly friend.

- Again, when we are compelled to believe an evil report of the object of our affection, we are careful not to give it unnecessary publicity. Does the mother go, and publish all abroad, the disgrace of her children? Does the affectionate wife, trumpet abroad upon the winds of heaven, the disgrace of her beloved husband? No, no. She locks it up in her faithful and affectionate bosom; the mother, and the wife, seal up their lips in silence, and breathe not aloud the errors of those they love. So with Christians; when they are convinced, beyond all contradiction, that something has occurred which has dishonoured God, and religion; do they go and blaze it all abroad? No, unless compelled by conscience, to give it utterance, it remains a secret in their own breast. And here let me ask, sinner, are you thus careful, not to circulate what you know to be true, to the discredit of religion, and to the friends of God? Suppose, you had seen a minster, or some other professed child of God, off his guard, and had witnessed in him the commission of some disgraceful sin, would you, from love to the cause, lock it up faithfully in your breast, and never breathe it forth upon the slightest breath of air, lest it should take wings, and God should be dishonored. If you hear an individual, repeating something that is dishonorable to religion, does it distress you? Do you reprove him for it? Do you endeavor to hush the matter up, and beg him not to repeat it? I leave this question with your consciences.

- Again, we naturally try to put the most favorable construction upon any event, that might be injurious to the interest or reputation of a friend whom we love. If an event has occurred that admits of divers constructions, we naturally put that construction, if possible, upon it, that is most consistent with the honor and reputation of our friend. If a circumstance should occur, in the family of a beloved friend of ours, which admitted of two opposite constructions; one of which, would disgrace our friend, and the other,

not at all; we should, from the very constitution of our being, naturally incline to the construction that was in his favor. It is a law of mind, that charity, or love, hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things, and is ever ready to put the most favorable construction upon any event, that the nature of the case will admit. We see the operation of this principle, and the developments of this law of mind, in the occurrences of every day. You will see Christians, inclining to put that construction upon any event, that is most consistent with the honor of religion, and of God. But do you witness this same disposition in sinners? Do you, sinners, who are here, find in yourselves a desire to construe every ambiguous occurrence in that way, which is most favorable to religion. If something is said by a professor of religoin, that turns out not to be true, do you naturally ascribe it to mistake, or to a misunderstanding, and find yourself very unwilling to believe that he meant to lie.

- Again, when any of the friends, of one whom we greatly love, fall into any conduct, that is greatly dishonorable to the object of our affection, it distresses us, and we are disposed, as far as possible, to prevent a repetition of the event. If the son of our dearest friend, should fall into a disgraceful crime, and should, in our presence, be guilty of things that were calculated greatly to dishonor his father; or had he run away from his father, and was wandering a vagabond up and down the earth; we should naturally desire to reclaim him. We should love and pity him, for his father's sake; should feel grieved, and distressed at the dishonor that this son was bringing upon his father; should fell inclined to warn and expostulate; to pray for him; and instead of going and trumpeting his failings all abroad, we should naturally be tender of his reputation, for his father's sake; and do all, that we honestly and consistently could, to cover up his faults. Now, sinner, how do you behave, when you see Christians err, and get out of the way? Do you feel distressed, that they bring such dishonor upon God? Do you pity and love them, for their Heavenly Father's sake? Do you pray for, and warn them, and try your utmost to reclaim them? Let conscience speak; I will not bring a railing accusation against you. But let conscience rebuke you in the name of the Lord.

I shall conclude this discourse with several remarks.

REMARKS.

First. With all these facts staring sinners in the face; standing out, in bold relief, upon the very head and front of their own experience; how is it, that they can suppose themselves to love God? Nothing is more common, than for impenitent sinners to affirm, that they do love God; and yet nothing is more certain, than that they do not love him. Whence is this mistake? I answer,

1. They do not distinguish between an admiration of his natural attributes, which they sometimes feel, and a love to his moral character. The omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, and wisdom of God, are attributes, which, when considered, are calculated to inspire awe, and admiration, in the breast of intelligent beings, whether they are sinful or holy. These attributes have no moral character. The devil himself, may be filled with awe, and admiration, when contemplating the displays of his natural attributes, which are manifested throughout all creation.

Again, sinners mistake a selfish gratitude, for love to God. A supremely selfish being, may be grateful, for favors bestowed upon himself, without any true regard to the character of

him who bestowed the blessing. Sometimes, when sinners escape from death, and some marked providence is interposed in their behalf, they feel a kind of gratitude; and they might feel the same kind of gratitude to Satan, as they do to God, had he bestowed the same favor upon them.

Again, sinners make their own god and fall in love with a god of their own creation. They conceive God to be such a being as they desire him to be. They strip him of his essential attributes, and ascribe to him a character that suits them, and then fall in love with their imaginary god, and walk by the light of their own fire, and compass themselves with sparks of their own kindling. The Universalist creates a god for himself; conceives of him as a being just suited to his taste; and if you keep out of his view the essential attributes of justice, and truth; he will talk and feel very piously; but, bring before his mind the true character of God, and his heart becomes at once like the troubled ocean, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

2. You see why it is, that impenitent sinners think, religion is something very gloomy. It is because they have no love to God. What would you think of a woman who should think it a very gloomy business to be with her husband; if she should complain of it as an irksome and disagreeable task, to engage in those offices that she knew would please him. If she accounted it a grief, a burden, and a vexation, to engage in the duties of a wife. You would say it was demonstration absolute, that she did not love her husband. So it is with sinners. When they conceive of religion as something gloomy, and calculated to rob them of all their joys, it is demonstration that they do not love God; that they have no delight in pleasing him.

3. You see from this subject, why it is that sinners grow weary and complain of having too many, and too long meetings. What would you think, should you hear an individual, who professed to love you, complain of weariness, on account of the length of your interview. Suppose he should say, Oh, the time does seem so long; I do wish our interview was ended. You would understand it. You would not, and could not believe that his heart was greatly set upon you. So, when you hear sinners complaining, that there are so many meetings; and expressing a wish, that they should not be more than an hour in length; this is an index to their feelings; they do not love God; they have no delight in his service; it is a burden, and a vexation to them, to be called to spend a short time in his presence.

4. Again, you see how it is, that some professors of religion prefer parties of pleasure, to prayer meetings. Prayer meetings, are the most delightful parties, to those that love God. But to those that do not love him, they are not a source of happiness; and when they are attended by such persons, it is from other motives than from love to God. Whenever you see professors of religion, manifesting more interest in worldly parties, than in religious meetings, you may know that they are hypocrites.

5. You see, from this subject that they are deceived, who say they always love God. There may be some instances, where persons may have been converted so young, that they cannot remember the time when they did not love God. If there are such persons, I am persuaded, that such instances have, hitherto, been very rare; with these exceptions, it is certain, that they are deceived, who suppose they have always loved God. Why, by their own showing, they have never had a change of heart. They feel towards God as they always did. If they ever had truly loved God, when they first exercised this love, they would know that it was something new to them, and could not possibly suppose that they had always loved him.

6. Again, you see from this subject, that impenitent sinners, are often great hypocrites. They profess to be very much opposed to hypocrisy, and say that they like true religion; they desire to see persons sincere in what they profess: think true religion is a good thing; and are very much in favor of it. They pretend to be very friendly to God, and say that they love him. Now, in these professions, they are arrant hypocrites. Christ might say to them, "I know you, that you have not the love of God in you." "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." "Ye are they that justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts." "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell."

7. You see from this subject, the manifest and barefaced hypocrisy, of those professors of religion, who, unnecessarily, publish the faults of Christians. We sometimes see professed Christians, as forward in speaking, in all companies, and on all occasions, of the faults, real or supposed, of the professed children of God, as infidels are. They will load down the winds, with their complaining of the imprudences and errors of those whose characters are nearly associated with all the endeared interests of religion. And this, they often do, when no such thing is called for, and where there can be no just pretense that God, or the interests of religion requires this service at their hands. They will even sometimes, to give these things the greater publicity, publish them in the newspapers, and all this under the shear pretense of doing God service and benefitting the cause of Christ. But this is the precise method, and the pretended motive of the Universalists in their slanderous publications against God, and his servants; and there is no more reason to believe that such professors of religion, have the true interests of Christ's kingdom at heart, than there is to believe that Universalists are actuated by a regard to the glory of God. Cases have occurred, in which professors of religion, have entertained passengers in steam boats, and in other public places, by retailing slanderous reports of revival men and measures. Vast prejudice, has been created, and immense evils have resulted from this infidel conduct of those who profess to love the blessed God. O shame, where is thy blush!

It is impossible, from the very laws of their mind, that they should engage in this work of death, this mischief of hell, if they truly loved the cause of Christ; and, to thus wantonly, hang up the cause, to reproach; by blazing abroad the failings, real or supposed, of those whose name, and character, and influence, are identified with the dearest interests, of Zion, is, as absolute demonstration, that they are hypocrites, as if they themselves should take their oath of it.

Finally. While sinners imagine that they love God already, it is not likely, that they ever will love him. Sinner, if you think that you love God already, you will never realize that you need a change of heart. If you really do love him, you certainly do not need a new heart, unless you would have a heart that does not love him. In pretending that you love God, you deny the very foundation of the doctrine of the new birth. But let me tell you, sinner, your delusion will soon be torn away. You cannot always deceive yourself with the imagination that you love God. You are going rapidly to eternity. There is, even now, perhaps, but a step between you and death. The moment that you appear in the presence of your Maker, and behold, the infinite contrariety there is betwixt your character and his; your delusion will vanish forever. You pretend to love God, while you know that you have no delight in his word, or worship, or service. Oh! What would heaven be to you; you cannot enjoy a prayer meeting, for one hour, and what would you do, in heaven employed in God's service forever and ever. Would heaven be heaven to you? Would you feel at home? Would you be happy there? What! Without the love of God in you. Away with this delusion: "for verily I say unto you except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

SERMON V.

TOTAL DEPRAVITY.

-- Romans viii. 7.--
"The carnal mind is enimity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

This lecture was typed in by Mike Todd.

THE law, spoken of here, is the moral law; or that law, which requires men to love God with all their heart, and their neighbour as themselves. The facts affirmed by the Apostle are, that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and for that reason, is not subject to the law of God that is, it does not obey the law of God, neither of course, can it obey this law, while it continues to be enmity against God. The apostle does not affirm, that a sinner cannot love God, but that a carnal mind cannot love God; for, to affirm that a carnal mind can love God, is the same as to affirm that enmity itself, can be love. In speaking from these words, I design

1st, to show, what is not meant by the carnal mind.

And, 2d. What the carnal mind, as used in the text, does mean.

3dly. That all men, who have not been born by the Spirit of God, have a carnal mind.

And, 4thly. That this carnal mind is enmity against God.

I. I am to show what is not meant by the carnal mind, as used in the text.

- 1. It is not meant that any part of the substance of the soul or body, is enmity against God.

- 2. It is not meant, that there is any thing in the constitution, or substance of body or mind, that is opposed to God. The mind is not saturated, or soaked with enmity.

- 3. Nor is it meant, that the mind or body is so constructed, that, from the constitution of our nature, we are opposed to God.

- 4. It is not meant, that there are appetites or propensities that are constitutional, which are enmity against God.

- 5. Nor is it meant, that all unconverted men, feel sensible emotions of enmity, or hatred to God. Enmity may exist in the mind, either as a volition, or an emotion. When existing in the form of a volition, it is a settled aversion to his character and government, of such a nature, that while it may have an abiding influence over our

conduct, it may not have a felt existence in the mind.

When existing in the form of an emotion, it then constitutes what we call feeling; and its existence is a matter of consciousness. I said that enmity may exist in the form of a volition, or a settled aversion to God, and have an abiding influence over our conduct, leading us to treat God as an enemy, without rising into the form of an emotion, that may be sensibly felt, and be the object of consciousness. Emotions, exist in the mind, only when those objects are before it, that are calculated to produce them; and a principle reason why sinners do not more frequently exercise such emotions of hatred to God, as to be sensible of their enmity against him, is, that they seldom think of God. God is not in all their thoughts. And when they do think of him, they do not think justly, or think of him as he really is; they deceive themselves with vain imaginations, and hide from their own view his real character; and thus cover up their enmity.

II. I am to show what is meant by the carnal mind, as used in the text.

The proper translation of this text is, the minding of the flesh is enmity against God. It is a voluntary state of mind. It is that state of supreme selfishness, in which all men are, previous to their conversion to God.

It is a state of mind; in which, probably, they are not born, but into which they appear to fall, very early after their birth. The gratification of their appetites, is made by them, the supreme object of desire and pursuit, and becomes the law of their lives; or that law in their members, that wars against the law of their minds, of which the apostle speaks.

They conform their lives, and all their actions to this rule of action, which they have established for themselves, which is nothing more nor less, than voluntary selfishness; or a controlling and abiding preference of self-gratification, above the commandments, authority, and glory of God.

It should be well understood, and always remembered, that the carnal mind, as used by the apostle, is not the mind itself but is a voluntary action of the mind. In other words, it is not any part of the mind, or body, but a choice or preference of the mind. It is, a minding of the flesh. It is, preferring self-gratification, before obedience to God. The constitutional appetites, both of body and mind, are in themselves innocent; but, making their gratification the supreme object of pursuit, is enmity against God.

It is the direct opposite of the character and the requirements of God. God requires us to subordinate all our appetites, of body and mind, to his glory, and to aim supremely at honouring and glorifying him. To love him with all our hearts, to bring all our powers of body and mind, under obedience to the law of love: and whatever we do, whether we eat or drink, we should do all to the glory of God. Now the carnal mind, or the minding of the flesh, is the direct opposite of this. It is pursuing as a supreme end, that which is the direct opposite of the requirements, and character of God. It is a choice, a preference, an abiding temper, or disposition of the mind; which consists in a determination to gratify self, and to make this, the high and supreme object of pursuit.

III. I am to show, that, previous to conversion, all men are in this state of enmity against God.

The Bible speaks of men, as possessing by nature, one common heart or disposition. This text does not say, that the carnal minds of some men, are enmity against God; but that the carnal mind is enmityr against God. In another place, God says, "every imagination of the thoughts of their heart, (not hearts) is only evil continually." Another passage, says, "the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live." Indeed, unconverted men, throughout the Bible, are spoken of as having a common heart; and what the Bible asserts, is seen to be a matter of fact. Go throughout all the ranks of the human family from the sensitive female, that faints at the sight of blood, to the horrid pirate, whose eyes flash fire, and whose lips burn with blasphemy; and present to them, all, the claims of God, and the gospel of his Son, require them to repent, and give their hearts to God; and with one consent, they will plead their inability. Go to the refined, and unrefined; the learned and unlearned; the high and low; rich and poor; old and young; male and female; bond and free, of every country and of every clime; and not one of them can be persuaded to embrace the Gospel, without the interposition of the Holy Ghost. Now, how is it possible, to account for this notorious fact, but upon the principle, that however the external deportment of different individuals, may be modified by circumstances, however much the natural temper may be made to differ, as respects men, by education, by animal temperament, by the state of the nervous system, and a variety of other considerations; still as it respects God, they possess the same disposition, and will, all, with one consent, begin to make excuses for not loving and obeying him.

IV. I am to show, that this carnal mind, or minding of the flesh, is enmity against God.

In my former discourse, on the subject of depravity, I endeavoured to demonstrate, by an appeal to facts, that unconverted men indo not love God.

- The first point to be established, under the fourth head of this discourse, is, that impenitent sinners hate God.

I shall pursue the same method, appeal to the same sources for proof, and go into the same field and gather facts, to establish the truth of this position, that I did in proof of the position that men do not love God. My appeal is to the well known laws of mind, as they are seen to develope themselves, in the transactions of every day. And, 1st. We are naturally pleased with those things that are displeasing to our enemies. Hatred is ill will. Therefore, whatever displeases or obliges our enemy, gratifies our ill will. It is a contradiction to say, that we hate an individual with a malevolent hatred, and yet have no satisfaction in what displeases him. It is the same as to say, that the gratification of our desires is not pleasing to us. We witness the developements of this law of mind, not only in our own case, but in the manifested feelings of those around us. See that man, if something has happened, greatly to disoblige his enemy, he cannot conceal the pleasure he takes in this event. If the same event has in some measure injured himself, and he is in some degree partaker in the common calamity, yet, if it has much more deeply injured, or completely ruined, his bitter enemy, he feels upon the whole, gratified with the event, and considers the

ruin of his enemy, as more than a compensation for his own loss, and does not mind bearing the portion that has fallen to him, inasmuch as it has overwhelmed the man that he so deeply hates. Now, whatever he may say, under whatever hypocritical pretence he may conceal the satisfaction that he feels in this event; yet it remains certain, that his hatred is gratified, that he really at heart, takes pleasure in an event which has gratified his malignant opposition to his enemy.

We see this same law of mind, developing itself towards God. Sinners manifest the greatest pleasure in sin. It is the element in which they live and move. They roll it as a sweet morsel under their tongue. They drink in iniquity like water. They even weary themselves to commit iniquity. They not only do these things themselves, but have pleasure in them that do them. The very things that are the most displeasing to God, are most pleasing to them. And the things that are the most pleasing to God, are most displeasing to them. They love what God hates, and hate what God loves. This demonstrates that they are in a state of mind which is the direct opposite, of the character and will of God. The whole bent, and current, and inclination of their minds are the direct opposite of God's requirements; and are enmity against him. This is matter of fact. Again. We are naturally gratified, to see the friends of our enemy forsake and dishonour him. If a man hate another, and the children, or friends of this enemy of his, do any thing to grieve, or dishonour, or injure him, in any way, he may speak of it, as if he regretted it; but if he pretends to regret it, he is a hypocrite. It is just as certain, that upon the whole, he rejoices in it, as it is that he hates him. He rejoices in it, because, it gratifies his hatred. You see this law of mind, manifesting itself with equal uniformity and strength towards the blessed God. When the professed friends of God forsake his cause, and do any thing to dishonour him, you may perceive that impenitent sinners are gratified. They will speak of it with exultation; and while Christians converse about it with sorrow, weep over it, and betake themselves to prayer that God will wipe away the reproach, it will become the song of the drunkard, and the wicked in bar- rooms, and in the corners of the streets, will laugh at it, and rejoice over it.

Again. We are apt to see and magnify the faults of the friends of our enemies. With what scrutiny, will politicians search after the faults of the friends and supporters of an opposing candidate. How eagle-eyed is that man in searching out all the failings of those that favour his enemy. How politicians, and others, will, not only see their real faults, but will greatly magnify them, and dwell upon them, until they fill their whole field of vision. They give their attention so exclusively to their faults, as to forget that they have any virtues. So enormous do their faults appear, that where they have the appearance of virtue, it is ascribed to duplicity and hypocrisy.

Now, you see this same spirit, often manifesting itself towards God. With what a searching and malignant gaze, are the eyes of unconverted men, fastened upon the professed friends of God. How eagerly they note their faults. How enormously they magnify them, and how apt are they to ascribe every appearance of virtue in them, to bigotry and hypocrisy.

Again. We are apt to misinterpret the motives, and put the worst construction upon the conduct of the enemies of our friends. If they are favouring the interests, and endeavouring to promote the happiness of one whom we greatly hate, we behold all their conduct through a jaundiced eye. The best things in them, are often ascribed by us, to the worst of motives; and those things in them, which deserve the most praise, are often, by us the most severely reprobated. Your acquaintance with your own hearts, and with the developements of the human character around you, will instantly supply abundant proofs of this remark. This feature of the human character, often, most odiously developes itself towards God. How frequently do we hear impenitent sinners, ascribing the most praiseworthy deeds of God's professed friends, to the most unworthy motives. How often are their acts of greatest self-denial, those things in which they most humbly serve, and most nearly resemble God, misrepresented, ascribed to the basest of motives, and made the very reasons, upon which they ground their pertinacious opposition to them. It is impossible to account for this upon any other principle than that of their enmity against God; for the persons against whom this enmity is vented, are often entire strangers to them; individuals against whom they can have no personal hostility. It is manifestly not enmity to them, any further then they resemble God, that calls forth these expressions of hatred, but to the cause in which they are engaged, to the master whom they serve.

Again. We naturally shun the friends of our enemies. We naturally avoid the society of one, who we know to be particularly friendly to our enemy; his company and conversation is irksome to us. We see this same spirit manifested by impenitent sinners toward the friends of God. They avoid them. Feel uneasy in their company. Their presence seems to impose restraints upon sinners, and they cannot abuse God with quite as much freedom when Christians are present. They are therefore glad to dispense with their company. How often do you observe impenitent sinners, in making up a party for a stagecoach, or railroad car, so arrange matters as to exclude a minister, or any engaged Christian from their company. They feel uneasy at his presence, and manifest the same temper that we should witness, if some distinguished friend of their greatest enemy were present with them. How can this be accounted for, on any other principle, than that of enmity against God. With these ministers, or professors of religion, they have, perhaps, very little personal acquaintance; have never had any misunderstanding with them, nor has any personal controversy existed between them. It must be on account of the cause in which they are engaged, and the master whom they serve, they wish to avoid them.

Again. We naturally admire magnify the virtues and overlook the vices, of the enemies of those we hate. How enthusiastic are politicians in their admiration of the talents, and wisdom, and virtues of those who take sides with them, and are opposed to the election of their political enemy. If any man has an enemy, he regards it as an evidence of wisdom, in any one else, to be opposed to the same man. He is inclined greatly to overrate the number, and the talents, and the influence of those who are opposed to his enemy. If he hears of a few that are opposed to him, and among them any

men of more than ordinary talents, he is apt to imagine that almost every body is opposed to him, and especially all the talented and virtuous part of the community, and to think that nobody favours him but the weak, the servile, and the interested.

It is just so on the subject of religion. How often do you hear impenitent sinners boasting of the talents, and the numbers, and the virtues of infidels, and of those that make no pretension to religion. Boasting of the excellent characters, high standing, and great influence of the leaders among the irreligious. While, at the same time, they depreciate both the numbers and the talents, of those that are the friends of God. They often consider them as a sickly, a bigotted, and a priest-ridden people: and this too, without any definite knowledge of their numbers, their characters, or their influence. What is this, but the outbreakings of enmity against God, and the cause which they love?

Again. We naturally hate to think of our enemies. The human mind is so constituted, that malevolent emotions distress it, and are the source of misery. Whenever our thoughts are intensely occupied in thinking of an individual whom we hate, those malevolent emotions will naturally arise, which are condemned by the conscience, and which of themselves constitute misery. For this reason, unless it be for the purpose of studying revenge, or in some way to gratify our hatred, we naturally turn our thoughts away from an object which we hate. And while, as I have shown in a former discourse, we naturally dwell upon a beloved object, we just as naturally abstract our thoughts from a hated one. Behold the developements of this law of mind in its action toward God. Sinners banish God from their thoughts. They are "unwilling to retain God in their knowledge;" and if at any time the thought of God is intruded upon them, they manifest uneasiness, and immediately divert their attention. If they are really convinced that they are sinners, and are in danger of his wrath, their selfish regard to their own happiness may lead them to reflection, and induce them to think of God, for the purpose of devising some means of escaping his just indignation.

Again. We dislike to converse about those that we hate; and unless it be for the purpose of calumniating them, and pouring forth our malignant hostility against them, we choose to remain silent and say nothing about them. You often hear a man say of his enemy, I desire not to talk about him. As I have shown, in the former discourse, we love to converse about our friends, because such conversation at once enkindles and expresses our love for them. Such conversation gratifies us. But we hate to converse about our enemies. For although there is a kind of gratification in giving vent to our enmity, it is at the same time the source and the essence of pain. Who has not witnessed the manifestations of this law of mind on the subject of religion? Who does not know that sinners are averse to talking about God? That they converse about him seldom, reservedly, and in a manner that shows they have no pleasure in it; but, on the contrary, that such conversation gives them pain?

Again. We are naturally pained to hear our enemy praised. Here is a party

of ladies and gentlemen assembled, and all of them but one, are particularly friendly to a distinguished and absent individual. This one is his, bitter enemy. His enmity, however, is unknown to the company, and they, of course, bring up their favourite as the subject of their conversation. They indulge themselves in enthusiastic commendations of their absent friend, and are delighted with the common bond of sympathy that exists among them upon this subject. But mark the embarrassment and distress of this enemy. While they, without heeding his agony, indulge themselves in the most lavish pouring forth of applause, this enemy is filled with the most irrepressible distress and indignation. He looks at his watch; takes out his snuff-box; walks to the window; tries to read a newspaper; turns up and down the room: tries to divert the attention of the company, and introduce some other topic of conversation. Now, suppose that one of the ladies turns to him and demands his opinion, remarking, that he seems to be absent-minded, and does not enjoy the conversation. If he is a gentleman, he may wish to be very civil to the lady, and endeavour to waive an answer to her question. But suppose she presses him, and wonders at his hesitancy, until his conduct attracts the attention of the other members of the party, when they all, with one consent, coincide with the lady, and insist upon an expression of his opinion. Now, an hundred to one, if, in spite of his good breeding, he does not manifest the enmity of his heart, and clearly exhibit to the company the deep malignity of his feelings.

Under similar circumstances, you may often witness the out breakings of enmity against God. Let a company of Christians, in a steamboat, or stage-coach, engage in conversation upon their favourite topic. Let them converse of Jesus Christ; and after a warm conversation, let them appeal to impenitent sinners in the midst of them, for an expression of their opinion. Or if, when in a proper place, they propose to conclude the interview with prayer, how often are they offended. Go and visit a family, some of whose members are Christians, and others not; sit down and converse warmly with the pious wife on the subject of religion, in the presence of her husband and unconverted family: what looks you will instantly perceive about the house. Perhaps one will go out at this door, and another at that, and if any of the impenitent remain, turn and direct your conversation to one of them; if it be the husband, perhaps he will almost forget that he is a gentleman, and abuse you to your face. Perhaps he will say, his religion is a matter between him and God. That he does not thank you for your impertinence. That it is none of your business, and that he does not thank you for coming there, to disturb him and his family upon the subject of religion. Now, why does he consider this a disturbance? Why does he look upon it as an impertinence? Why is he so displeased? Certainly he has no reason to fear that you will injure him, or his family. If he loved the subject, and loved God, is it not certain that he would thank you for your visit, and be pleased with the interview. And is it not proof to demonstration, that he hates God and religion, when he considers the kind introduction of the subject, as an intrusion, and a vexation.

Again. We are naturally pained and incredulous on hearing of the prosperity of our enemy. If we hear that our enemy is gaining friends, or

popularity, or property, or influence, it distresses us. We are inclined to disbelieve it. And, if there be any room for doubt, we are sure to hang a doubt on every point that admits debate. See that man, with his hypocritical face; he has heard of the prosperity of his enemy, and professes to rejoice in it. But if he believes it, he only mentions it on occasions where he cannot avoid it; and then, the spirit and manner of his conversation, if he pretend to rejoice in it, will, to a discerning mind, develope the deep hypocrisy of his heart. But if there be a possibility of calling the truth of it in question, you will find that he disbelieves it altogether. You will find him dwelling upon, and greatly magnifying, any little circumstance, that will render it improbable; while he depreciates, and casts into the shade, the weighty considerations, that demonstrate its truth. Who has not witnessed the exhibitions of this principle, on the subject of religion? Let a report of the prosperity of religion, and of great revivals, be circulated through the community, and see how Universalists, and other impenitent sinners, will manifest uneasiness, and try to disprove it all; will question the evidence, and try to pour contempt upon the report; and upon those that believe it. They do not believe that so many have been converted; you will see, say they, that the professed converts will all go back again, and be worse than ever. The reports, say they, are greatly exaggerated, and if there are any Christians in these revivals, there are probably ten hypocrites to one Christian. Such facts as these, speak for themselves. They manifest a state of mind that cannot be mistaken. It is the boiling over of enmity against God.

Again. We naturally hate efforts to promote the interests of our enemies. We are very apt to cavil at the measures which they use; call their motives in question; and find a great deal of fault with the spirit, and manner of their efforts; when we are opposed to the end which they have in view. If it be to promote the interests of our enemy, we are naturally watching for objections, and are captious, and ill-natured, in regard to their movements. We are apt to ridicule, and oppose such efforts; and any thing like zeal, in such a case, is looked upon by us, as enthusiasm and madness. Witness the conduct of impenitent sinners, on the subject of religion. If any efforts are made to promote the interests of the kingdom of God; to honour and glorify him, they are offended. They get up an opposition. They not unfrequently ridicule their meetings. Speak evil of those that are engaged in them. Denounce their zeal, as enthusiasm, and madness; and something for which they deserve the execration of all their neighbours. People may get together, and dance all night, and impenitent sinners do not think it objectionable. The theatre may be opened, every night, at great expense, and the actors and multitudes of others, may be engaged all day in preparing for the entertainment of the evening; and thus the devil may get up a protracted meeting, and continue it for years, and they see no harm in it: no enthusiasm in all this. Ladies may go, and stay till midnight, every evening. Poor people may go, and spend their time and money, and waste their health and lives, and ruin their souls; and there is no harm in all this. But let Christians do any thing like this, and exercise one tenth part of this zeal in promoting the honour of God, and the salvation of souls; why, it would be talked of from Dan to Beersheba. Sinners may go to a ball, or party, and stay nearly all night; but excessively indecorous it is for ladies

to go out to evening meetings. For Christians to have protracted meetings, and to pray till 10 o'clock at night. Abominable! Why, such things are spoken against in the newspapers. They are the subjects of remark and reprobation in steamboats, and stage-coaches, and bar-rooms, and wherever impenitent sinners are assembled. Politicians, may manifest the greatest zeal on the subject of politics. May hold their caucuses; post up their handbills; blaze away in the public journals; appoint their ward-committees; ransack every nook and corner; parade through the streetsar with their music; fire their guns, show their flags, transport their frigates through the streets on wheels, send their coaches up and down the streets with hand-bills posted on their sides, to bring men to the polls, hundreds of thousands of dollars may be expended to carry an election, and all this is well enough. But, O, let Christians but begin to serve God with such zeal, and make such efforts to build up his kingdom, and save the souls of men; and ten to one, if the wicked did not absolutely mob them, and cry out that such efforts would ruin the nation. They would brand such proceedings as the most arrant (throughgoing) enthusiasm, and downright madness. But is it because politics are of so much more importance than the salvation of souls? Is it, because no effort is necessary to arouse a slumbering world, and bring sinners to act, and think, and feel, as they ought on the subject of salvation. No, there is reason enough for the highest possible degree of Christian effort, and sinners know it very well; but their enmity against God is so great, that such efforts cannot be made without arousing all the hell there is within them.

Again. We easily believe an ill report, of one whom we hate. If a man hears any evil of an enemy, he believes it, on the slightest testimony. He does not care to inquire whether the report may be relied upon, but he eagerly listens to every breath of slander, yields the most unqualified credence, to almost any and every falsehood, that serves to blacken the reputation of his enemy. The reason of this is, his ill will is gratified with such reports, he hopes that they are true, and therefore easily believes them. How frequently do we see this feature of the human heart developing itself on the subject of religion. With what eagerness do sinners listen to every false and slanderous report, that may be circulated about the friends of God. It is surprising to see, what absurd and ridiculous things they will believe. They manifest the most unequivocal desire to believe evil of those who profess friendship to God. It is amazing, to see the enmity of their hearts manifesting itself to such a degree, that often, there is nothing too absurd, ridiculous, and contradictory for them to believe, if it only has a tendency to cast contempt and ridicule upon the cause of God.

Again. We naturally love to give publicity to any evil report about our enemies. We desire to have others feel towards them, as we do. It gratifies our malignant feelings, to hear and to circulate those reports that are injurious to the enemy we hate. Hear that man. He meets with a neighbour, and says, have you heard such and such a report of such an individual? No, I have not. Ah, I supposed that you knew it, or I should have said nothing about it. Now hear him go into the whole subject, and relate, and aggravate every circumstance, of which he has heard, and comment upon them as he goes along; at length he closes, by saying I hope you will not mention this,

but it is a matter of fact. And now he goes abroad, and falls in with another neighbour and relates the same to him, as a great secret; hopes he will say nothing about, but thinks the fact cannot be disputed.

Every where he goes, he takes this course; he hopes the thing will not get abroad, to the injury of the poor man. Tis a mournful event. He is truly sorry, that any such thing has happened. In all this he is a hypocrite, and he knows it. He is glad the event has happened, and he delights to publish it. He seems to covet the exclusive privilege, of being the bearer of the first intelligence to every door. How often do we witness the developements of this principle against God. If something takes place, that is disgraceful among the professed friends of God, and injurious to the interests of religion, how ready sinners are, to give it universal publicity.

They will talk about it. Publish it on all occasions; blaze it abroad in the public prints, and send it in every direction upon the wings of the wind. If any one becomes deranged, in connexion with a revival of religion, alas, what an ado is made about it. Thirty thousand citizens of the United States may be murdered every year by strong drink. The groceries may fill bedlam with maniacs. Homicide, and suicide, and all manner of abominations may be the result of rum selling, and yet the indignation of sinners is not aroused. But if some nervous individual becomes deranged, in view of his abominable crimes against his Maker, in connexion with a revival or a protracted meeting; the press groans under the burden of the doleful complainings that are poured out upon the public ear.

- But, Secondly. Under this 4th general division of the subject, I observe that impenitent sinners hate God with a MORTAL HATRED.

That is, were it in their power, they would destroy his very existence. Probably, very few sinners, are sensible that they have this degree of enmity, and may feel shocked at the assertion. Nevertheless, it is true. There are several reasons why they may never have known, that such was the state of their hearts. It is probable, that most of them, have never dared to indulge any such feelings. Another reason, why they never have desired to destroy God, is that they have never thought it possible to destroy him. There are many things which sinners have never designed or desired to do, because they have never thought it possible. Did either of you ever design to be a king. Did you ever entertain a thought of being a king. Have you ever felt any ambition to be a king. Probably you never did. And for the very reason, that you have never thought it possible. Suppose a throne, a crown, and a sceptre, were put within your reach; and the robe of royalty was tendered to your acceptance; do you not think that you have pride and ambition enough, under such circumstances, to desire to be a king. And suppose when you had accepted the crown, and swayed the sceptre over one nation, you had the opportunity of extending your empire, and making your dominion universal, over all nations; do you not believe, that you would , instantly desire to do it. And now, suppose that when all the governments of this world were subject to your sceptre; suppose an opportunity should offer for you to extend your dominion over the entire universe of worlds, and should you conceive it possible to subject God

himself to your controul; are you too good, under such circumstances, to aim at exercising dominion over all the universe and over God himself. Sinners, who would trust the best among you. You know not your hearts, if you suppose that under such circumstances, there would be any limit to your ambition.

But again. Sinners do not realize the greatness of their enmity against God, because, as yet, God lets them go unpunished, and they do not believe, that he will send them to hell for their sins. If God will let them have their own way, as long as he does not interfere, to punish them for their sins, or disturb them in their courses of iniquity, their enmity remains comparatively at rest. But who among them would not rise up and murder him, were it in their power, if he should attempt to punish them for their sins.

No, they would sooner wish him in hell, than consent that he should deal with them in justice.

But again. It is evident, that the enmity of sinners against God isn MORTAL, from the fact, that they are in rebellion against him, and in league with devils, to oppose his government, and undermine his throne. Sinners do not obey him. The whole weight of their influence and example is opposed to his government. They do every thing that the nature of the case admits to annihilate his authority, and destroy his government. Rebellion, is always aimed at the life of the sovereign, and it is impossible for sinners, to be more absolutely in rebellion against God, than they are.

But again. The question has been tried. God has once put himself as much in the power of men, as, in the nature of things, was possible. The second person in the Godhead, took to him human nature, and put his human nature within the power of men. And what was the result? They rested not, till they had murdered him. Do you say, that those were the Jews. That you are of a different spirit? This has always been the favorite plea of sinners.

The ancient Jews, persecuted and murdered the prophets. The Jews of Christ's day, professed to honor the prophets, built their sepulchers, and insisted that, if they had lived in the days of the prophets, they would not have persecuted them. But they persecuted and murdered Christ; and Christ himself informs them, that by persecuting him, they showed that they approved the deeds of their fathers. Now sinner, suppose you lived under a government that was a monarchy. Suppose your fathers had rebelled against the rightful king, and placed an usurper upon the throne; and that you, their children, although you did not participate in the original rebellion, yet now, you maintain the same ground which they took, support the usurper, and refuse obedience to your rightful sovereign. Now, is not this, in law and in equity; is it not to all intents and purposes, justifying the conduct of your fathers; becoming a partaker in their crimes, incurring the same guilt, and deserving the same condemnation. Suppose, you did not originally murder Christ; still, is it not a fact, that you now refuse to obey him, as your rightful sovereign, that you support the authority of

Satan, who has usurped the government of this world by refusing to repent; by withholding your service, and your heart from Jesus Christ. Do you not, to all intents and purposes, become a partaker in the crime of those who murdered him. He claimed their obedience; and they arose and imbrued their hands in his blood. He claims your obedience, you utterly refuse it; and thus show, that you approve the deeds of the Jews. And that, were he in your power, sooner than submit to his authority, you would murder him again. This conduct makes you in the eye of common law, a partaker in their crime. In the eye of conscience, of reason, and of common sense; in the eye of God, and in the judgment of heaven, and earth and hell, you are guilty of the blood of Christ, and prove to a demonstration, that were it in your power, you would dethrone and murder the Almighty.

Again. Thirdly. Sinners hate God supremely. That is, they hate him more than they do any thing, and every thing; any body; and every body else in the universe. Do not startle at this, as if it were a rash and extravagant assertion. It is a sober, but an awful truth. Look at this. All other enmity can be overcome by kindness. The greatest enemy you have on earth, may subdue your enmity by kindness, and win you over to become his friend. But how is it, that all the kindness of God, infinitely greater kindness than any human being has had it in his power to show you, has not overcome your enmity, but you still remain in rebellion against him.

Again. A mere change of circumstances in any other case of enmity, will change the heart. Here are two political opponents, between whom an hereditary enmity exists. Their fathers were enemies. They have always been enemies. They have both believed and spoken, all evil of each other. Now, let a change of politics bring them both upon the same side of a political question, and they instantly become friends. Let them have an opportunity to play into each other's hands; let both their hearts, be set upon the election of the same candidate; see how cordially they will co-operate. How warmly they will take each other by the hand. They will walk, and sit, and dine together; attend political meetings; defend each other's reputation, magnify each other's virtues; and throw the kind mantle of charity over each other's vices. And all this they will do heartily. Their real feelings towards each other are changed. Their hearts are really changed towards each other, and they can truly say, whereas we formerly hated, now we love each other. All this has been effected, merely, by a change of circumstances, without any interference by the Holy Ghost. Let the President of the United states appoint his greatest political opponent to the first office in his gift, and he makes him his friend. Suppose the greatest anti-Jackson man in this city, who has said and done the most of any man in the United States, to prevent his election, should be reduced to poverty, and had no means of support, for himself and family. Now suppose, when the news of his extremity should reach the president, he should appoint him to a post of high honour and emolument, would not this change his heart? Would he complain that he could not become the president's friend, until the Holy Ghost had changed his heart? No. Such kindness would be like pouring coals of fire upon his head, would melt him down in an instant; would change the whole current of his soul. How then, does it happen, that all the offers of heaven, and all the threatenings

of hell, that all the boundless love, and compassion manifested in giving his only begotten, and well beloved Son to die for you; when mercy stoops from heaven with bleeding hands, and offers to save, and hell roars from beneath, and threatens to devour; when God approaches you, with a world of moving, melting motives, gathered from earth, and heaven, and hell, and rolls their mountain-weight upon you; that these considerations will never change your heart, unless made effectual by the Holy Ghost?

Again. If men did not hate God supremely they would INSTANTLY REPENT.

Suppose, that when you go home tonight, at the deep hour of midnight; when you are all asleep in an upper apartment of your house; you are awaked by the cry of fire: you look up, and find your dwelling wrapt in flames around you. You leap from your bed, and find the floor under your feet just ready to give way. The roof over your head is beginning to give way, and ready to fall in upon you, with a crash. Your little ones awake, and are shrieking and clinging to your night-clothes. You see no way of escape. At this moment of unutterable anguish and despair, some one comes dashing through the flames with his hair and clothes on fire, seizes you in your distraction with one hand, and gathers his other long and strong arm around your little ones, and again rushes through the flames at the hazard of his life. You absolutely swoon with terror. In a few moments, you open your eyes in the street, and find yourself supported in the arms of your deliverer. He is rubbing your temples with camphor, and fanning you, to restore your fainting life. You look up, and behold in the scorched and smoky features of him who rescued you, the man whom you have supremely hated. He smiles in your face, and says, fear not, your children are all alive; they are all standing around you. Now, would you, could you look coldly at him, and say, O I wish I could repent, that I have hated you so much. I wish I could be sorry for my sin against you. Could you say this? No. You would instantly roll over upon your face, and wash his feet with your tears, and wipe them with the hairs of your head. This scene, would change your heart in a moment, and ever after, the name of that man would be music in your ears. If you heard him slandered, or saw him abused, it would enkindle your grief and indignation. And now, sinner, how is it, that you complain, that you cannot repent of your sins against God? Behold his loving kindness, and his tender mercy. How can you look up? How can you refrain from repentance? How can you help being dissolved in broken-hearted penitence at his blessed feet? Behold his bleeding hands! See his wounded side! Hark! hear his deep death-groan, when he cries "it is finished," and gives up the ghost for your sins. Sinner, are you marble, or adamant! Has your heart been case-hardened in the fires of hell, that you don't repent? Surely nothing but enmity, deep as perdition, can be proof against the infinitely moving inducements to repentance.

But perhaps you will say, that you do not like to hear about hell and damnation, that you love mercy, and if ministers would present the love and mercy of God, and present God as a God of mercy, sinners would love him. But this is all a mistake. Sinners are as much opposed to the mercy of God, as they are to any of his attributes. This is matter of fact, and the

experience of every day. Hark, what is that din and outcry? Whence are those cries of crucify him! crucify him! that load down the winds, and break upon our ears, from the distance of more than 1800 years? Why, God has revealed his mercy and all the world are in arms against it: Jesus Christ has come, upon the kind errand of salvation, and the world is filled with uproar, to murder him. Mercy, is the very attribute of God, against which mankind are arrayed. For thousands of years, the sword of vindictive justice has slept in its scabbard, and God has been unfolding and holding out the attribute of mercy. All the opposition in the world, to God, and to religion, is aimed particularly at his mercy. What is Christianity? What is the Bible? What are revivals of religion? What are all those things that have called forth so much of the opposition of earth and hell, but so many exhibitions of the mercy of the blessed God. When justice ascends the throne, the cavelling mouths of sinners will be stopped. Justice, will soon hush the tumult, and loud opposition of sinners, against their Maker. Then, every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world shall be found guilty before God. But now, is the dispensation of his mercy; and all earth is up in arms against it: and why are you such a hypocrite, as to pretend to love the mercy of God. If you love it, why do you not accept it? If you love a God of mercy, why have not all the moving manifestations of it, that have passed before you, melted you down and subdued your heart?, O sinner, sinner, speak no more proudly. Boast not yourself, that you love any attribute of God, for if, while you remain impenitent, you say you love him, you are a liar, and the truth is not in you. I will conclude this discourse with several remarks.

1st. You see, why it is, that Universalists and other sinners, are so disturbed, with revivals of religion. It is because God comes so manifestly forth in the exercise of his mercy. They cannot bear, such an exhibition of God. It disturbs all the sediment, and lurking enmity of their hearts. These professed friends of God and men, as soon as God displays himself, and men become the recipients of his mercy, are greatly offended by it.

2d. You see the importance of preaching clearly, and frequently, the enmity of sinners hearts against God. There is, and has been, for ages, in most instances, a striking defect, in exhibiting this most important subject. Ministers seem to have been afraid to charge men with being the enemies of God. I never heard this doctrine declared in my life, in such a way that I understood it, previous to my own conversion. Many ministers, seem to have regarded total depravity, as consisting in nothing more than the absence of love to God.

The church, does not seem to have realized, or believed, that the carnal mind is absolutely enmity against God. Although there is no other truth, more abundantly taught in the word of God, or more unanswerably evident, from matter of fact; yet how few sinners have been made to see and believe it. I have in hundreds of instances, conversed with persons who have set under the preaching of the Gospel all their days, and who never had been made to see this fundamental truth of the Gospel.

It is a truth, upon which is founded, the necessity of the new birth; of the spirit's influences, and without understanding and believing it, how are we to expect the world to be converted to God.

Again, 3d. From this subject, it is manifest, that if sinners should take their oath, that they hate God, it would not make it at all more evident. If all the men in the universe should take their oath that the sun shines at noonday, it would not add a particle to the evidence that the sun shines, or render it any more certain, in itself, or evident to others. It is a simple matter of fact, of which we can have no higher testimony than our own senses. So, it is matter of fact, that sinners are the enemies of God. They act it out, before all men. It is as evident, as that they have an existence, and how it ever came to be questioned, or ever forgotten, or overlooked, is, to me, most mysterious.

4th. As I remarked in the morning. There are many professors of religion, who could not make it more evident that they are the enemies of God, if they should take their oath of it. They speak against revivals, and those engaged in promoting them. They give publicity to the faults, real or supposed, of those who are the friends of God. Retail slander, and manifest their opposition to God, in so many ways, that their hypocrisy and enmity against God are perfectly manifest.

5th. Those persons, who have not known, by their own experience, that they have been enemies of God, have not been converted, nor so much as truly convicted. What have they repented of? Have they repented merely of their outward sins? This is impossible, unless they have understood, and condemned the fountain of iniquity, from which these abominations have proceeded. The head and front of their offending is, that they have been the enemies of God. Nay their minding of the flesh, has been of itself, enmity against God. And now, do they talk of having repented, when they have never so much as known, that, in which their chief guilt consists. Impossible!

6th. Those sinners that deny that they are the enemies of God, are never likely to be converted, until they confess their enmity. "He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." There are many persons, who will confess themselves sinners, but will deny that they are the enemies of God. Thus they cover up the great amount of their sins; acknowledge their outward acts of wickedness, but deny the enmity from which they flow. While they do this, God will never forgive them.

7th. These discourses exhibit a very different view of total depravity, from that which regards depravity, as physical, or constitutional, or as belonging to the substance of the body or mind. They exhibit all depravity as voluntary, as consisting in voluntary transgression. As the sinners own act. Something of his own creation. That, over which, he has a perfect control, and for which he is entirely responsible. O, the darkness, and confusion, and utter nonsense, of that view of depravity, which exhibits it, as something lying back, and the cause of all actual transgression. Something

created in the sinner, and born with him. Some physical pollution, transmitted from Adam, through the agency of God or the devil, which is in itself sinful, and deserving the wrath of God, previous to the exercise of voluntary agency on the part of the sinner. This is absurd and impossible.

It is not only absurd and impossible, but is virtually charging all the sin in the world upon God, and if it is firmly believed, renders repentance in every such case a natural impossibility. While the sinner supposes himself to be condemned, not only for his conduct, but for his nature; and while he believes that his conduct is the natural and necessary result of a depraved constitution; and that his nature must be changed, before he can obey his Maker, it is manifestly impossible for him, to blame himself for his sins. He must cease not only to be a reasonable being, but to have common sense, before he can justify God, and condemn himself, upon these principles. No wonder that men who maintain such a view of depravity as this, should also maintain that sinners are unable to repent. It is true, that upon these principles of depravity, and with these views, sinners cannot repent of themselves, nor can God make them repent. The only way in which God can bring a sinner to repentance, is, by correcting his views: by showing him what sin is; and causing him to see, that it is for his conduct, and not for his nature, that he is to repent; and that his conduct and not his nature needs to be changed. To teach physical, or constitutional depravity, is not only to teach heresy and nonsense: but it leads the sinner inevitably to justify himself, and condemn God; and renders repentance, while the sinner believes it, impossible.

8th. You see, why sinners find it so hard to be religious. The total difficulty, consists in their unwillingness to yield up their selfishness.

9th. It cannot be pretended, with any show of reason, that these discourses amount to any denial of moral depravity. I have purposely denied physical depravity; but certainly these discourses maintain moral depravity; that for which the sinner is to blame; that of which he must repent, in all its length and breadth. It would seem, that in the estimation of some, a denial that the nature is in itself depraved, is a virtual denial of all depravity. In other words, they seem to think it a virtual denial of the guilty source of all actual transgression. I have endeavoured to show, that the cause of outbreaking sin, is not to be found in a sinful constitution, or nature; but in a wrong original choice; in which the sinner prefers self-gratification to the will of his Maker; and which choice, has become the settled preference of his soul; and constitutes the deep fountain, from which flow the putrid waters of spiritual and eternal death. I am unable to see by what figure of speech, 16 that is called moral depravity, which either consists in a depraved constitution, or is the natural result of it. Why should it be called moral depravity? Certainly it can have no such relation to moral law, as to deserve punishment. It is indeed marvelous, that in the 19th century, it should be thought heresy, to call sin a transgression of the law, and insist that it must be the act of a voluntary agent. Has it come to this, that those who virtually deny all moral depravity, and virtually charge all the sins of the world upon God; are gravely to complain of heresy in those who maintain moral depravity in all its length and breadth, but who deny

physical or constitutional depravity? What next? If it be heresy, to say that sin is a transgression of the law, certainly the apostle was not orthodox.

10th. From this subject it is plain, either, that sinners must be annihilated, or converted, or forever lost. With a mind that is enmity against God, it is impossible that they should be happy. Infidels have no cause to sneer at the doctrine of the new birth. If there were no Bible in the world, the doctrine of total, depravity, as exhibited in these discourses, would be abundantly manifest, as a matter of fact. And it cannot be denied, that except men pass through just that change of mind, which is in the Bible, called the new birth, or a change of heart, they must, self-evidently, be annihilated, or damned to all eternity.

11th. Sinners are not almost Christians. We sometimes hear persons say, of such an impenitent sinner, that he is almost a Christian. The truth is, the most moral impenitent sinner in the world, is much nearer a devil, than a Christian. Look at that sensitive young lady. Is she an impenitent sinner; then she only needs to die, to be as very a devil as there is in hell. Any slight occurrence, that should destroy her life, would make her a devil. Nay, she needs no positive influence to be exerted upon her, to make a fiend of her; only remove all restraints, and the very enmity of hell boils over in her heart at once. Let God take from under her his supporting hand. Let him cease, but for a moment, to fan her heaving lungs, and she would open her eyes in eternity, and if she dared, would curse him to his face.

12th. How impossible, it would be, for sinners, to enjoy heaven, if permitted to go there in their present state of mind. Only break down the body; let the mind burst forth into the presence of God; let it look abroad, and behold his glories, and see holiness to the Lord, inscribed on every thing around them; let them listen to the song of praise; let them perch upon the loftiest battlement of heaven, let them hear the song of holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, and so great would be their enmity, if unconverted, that, if permitted, they would dive into the darkest cavern of hell, to escape from the presence of the infinitely holy Lord God.

13th. While sinners remain in impenitence, they yield to God no sort of obedience, any more than the devil does. Their carnal mind is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. In this state of mind, until the supreme preference of their mind is changed, until they have given up minding the flesh, and obey God, it is in vain to talk of obedience. The first act of obedience that you ever will or can perform, is to cease minding the flesh, and give your heart to God.

14th. You see the wickedness and folly of those parents who think their unconverted children friendly to religion. You cannot teach them a greater heresy, than that they are friendly to religion, or to God. I have often heard professing parents say, that their children were not enemies to religion. No wonder that such children were not converted, under such teaching as this. It is just the doctrine that the devil desires you to teach them. You only give your children the impression that they are friendly to religion already, and they will never know, why they need a new heart. While in

this state of mind, and labouring under this delusion, they cannot so much as be convicted, much less converted.

15th. You see from this subject, the folly, and the falsehood of saying, of an impenitent sinner, he is a good-hearted man; when the fact is, that his heart is enmity against God.

Lastly. You see, how necessary it is, that there should be a hell. What shall be done with these enemies of God, if they die in their sins. Heaven is no place for you. It would doubtless be worse to you than hell, if you were allowed to go there. A hell, is deserved by sinners, and is evidently needed for those who die in enmity against God. And now, sinner, you see your state, you must be convinced of the truth of what I have said. Remember that your enmity is voluntary. It is of your own creation. That which you have long cherished and exercised. Will you give it up? What has God done, that you should continue to hate him? What is there in sin, that you should prefer it to God? Why, O why, will you indulge, for a moment longer, this spirit of horrible rebellion, and enmity against the blessed God? Go but a little further, cleave to your enmity but a little longer; and the knell of eternal death shall toll over your damned soul, and all the corners of despair will echo with your groans.

SERMON VI.

WHY SINNERS HATE GOD.

-- John xv. 25.--
"They have hated me without a cause."

This lecture was typed in by Paul J. DiBartolo

These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ. In my two former discourses on total depravity, I have endeavored to demonstrate, that all impenitent sinners, hate God supremely. And having, as I suppose, established this doctrine beyond controversy by an appeal to matters of fact; it now becomes a very solemn and important question, why sinners hate God?

If sinners have a good reason for hating God, then they are not to blame for it; but if they have no good reason, or if they hate him when they ought to love him; then they have incurred great guilt by their enmity to God.

In speaking from this subject, I design

1st. To show what is not the reason of their hatred.

2nd. What is the reason of it.

3rd. That they hate him, for the very reasons, for which they ought to love him.

I. I am to show, what is not the reason of their hatred.

- 1st. It is not because God has so constituted them, that they have a physical, or constitutional aversion to God. The text affirms that sinners have hated God without a cause. Not that there is no reason why they hate him; but no good reason. Not that there is strictly no cause for their hatred; for every effect must have some cause; but there is no just cause. If God had so created man, that he was under a physical necessity of hating his Maker, this would not only be a cause, but a just cause for hating him. If God had incorporated with the very substance of his being, a constitutional aversion to himself; this would be a sufficient cause, not only for the sinner's hating him, but a good reason why all other beings should hate him.

- 2nd. The sinner's hatred of God, is not caused by any hereditary, or transmitted disposition to hate him. A disposition to hate God, is itself hatred. Disposition, is an action of the mind, and not a part of the mind itself. It is therefore absurd, to talk of an hereditary, or transmitted disposition to love or hate God, or anything else. It is impossible that a voluntary state of mind should be hereditary, or transmitted from one generation to another.

If any of you understand by disposition, a propensity, or temper; not an action, which is not a voluntary state of mind; but a quality, or attribute, that is part of the mind itself, I say,

- 3rd. That the sinner's hatred, is not caused by any such attribute, or property, that makes a part of the mind, and which in itself has a natural and necessary aversion to God.

- 4th. There is no just cause, in the constitution of our nature, for opposition to God. The nature of man, is as it should be. Its powers are as God made them. He has made them in the best manner, in which infinite power, and goodness and wisdom could make them. They are perfectly adapted to the service of his creator; and if we survey all the exquisite mechanism, and delicate organization of the body, and scrutinize all the properties, and powers, and capabilities, of the mind, we can find no just cause of complaint; but on the other hand, infinite reason to love, and adore the great architect, and exclaim with the Psalmist, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

- 5th. There is no just cause for the sinner's hatred, in that wise and benevolent arrangement, by which all men have descended from one common ancestor; and under which divine arrangement, we are naturally, (not necessarily) influenced; and our characters modified by the circumstances under which we have our being. Our being so constituted, as naturally to influence each other, and be highly instrumental in modifying each other's character, is a wise and benevolent arrangement, of the highest importance to the universe: but like every other good thing, is liable to great abuse; and by how much the more powerful our influence is, to promote virtue when we do right, by just so much the greater is our influence, to promote vice, when we do wrong.

- 6th. Again. There is no cause for the sinner's hatred, in the moral government of God. His commandments are not grievous; nor impossible to be obeyed; nor calculated to produce misery when obeyed: but on the contrary, "his yoke is easy, and his burden is light." His commandments are easily obeyed; and obedience naturally results in happiness. If God had established a government, the requirements of which, were so high, that it was extremely difficult to yield obedience to his laws. If the laws were so obscure and intricate, and difficult to understand, that an honest mind were in great danger of mistaking the real meaning of his requirements; or if his laws were arbitrary, unnecessary, and capricious; or if they were guarded by unjust and cruel sanctions: if any of these things were true, sinners would have a just cause to hate God. But not one of them is true.

- Again. Sinners have no just cause for their hatred, in the requirements of the Gospel. If the conditions of salvation, held forth in the Gospel, were arbitrary, capricious, or unjust; if it were impossible to comply with them; if the terms of salvation were put so high, that men have not natural power to obey them, and fulfil the conditions upon which their salvation is suspended. If God commanded them to repent, when they had no power to repent; if he required them to believe, when they had no power to believe; and threatened to send them to hell, for not repenting and believing; in any, and in all these cases, sinners would have just reason to hate God. But none of these things are true. The conditions of the Gospel, so far from being arbitrary, are indispensable in their nature, to salvation, so far from being put so high, that it is impossible, or even difficult to comply with them; they are brought down as low as they possibly can be, without rendering the sinner's salvation impossible. Repentance and faith, are indispensable to fit the soul for the enjoyment of heaven; and if God should dispense with these conditions, and consent that the sinner should remain in his sins, it would render the sinner's damnation certain.

- Again. Not only are the conditions of salvation necessary in their own nature, but it is easy to comply with them. Much easier than to reject them. Our powers of mind, are as well suited to accept, as to reject the Gospel. The motives to accept, are infinitely greater than to reject the offers of mercy. So weighty, indeed are the motives to comply with the conditions of the Gospel, that sinners often find it difficult to resist them, and they are under the necessity of making almost ceaseless efforts to maintain themselves in impenitence and unbelief.

- Again. There is no just cause for hating God, in his providential government of the world. There is no reason to doubt, that God, so administers his providential government, as to produce upon the whole, the highest, and most salutary, practicable influence in favor of holiness. It is manifest that his moral laws, are guarded by the highest possible sanctions: that all has been done, which the perfection of moral government could do, to secure universal holiness in the world. So it is true, beyond all reasonable doubt, that his physical or providential government, is administered in the wisest possible manner.

It is doubtless administered solely for the benefit , and in support of moral government. It is so arranged, as to bring out and exert the highest moral influence, that such a government is capable of exerting. Many sinners talk, as if they supposed God might have administered his governments, both moral, and providential, in a manner vastly more judicious, and more

highly calculated to secure perfection in the conduct of his subjects. They seem to think, that because God is almighty, he therefore can work any conceivable absurdity, or contradiction. That he can secure perfection in moral agents, by the exercise physical omnipotence; and that the existence of sin in our world, is proof conclusive, that, although on some accounts, he is opposed to sin, yet upon the whole, he prefers its existence to holiness in its stead. They seem to take it for granted, that the two governments which God exercises over the universe, moral, and providential; might have been so administered, as to have produced universal holiness throughout the universe. But this is a gratuitous, and most wicked assumption. It is no fair inference from the omnipotence and omniscience of God; and the assumption is founded upon an erroneous view of the nature of moral agency, and of moral government.

- Again. There is no just cause for hatred, in any thing that belongs to the character of God. There is nothing hateful or repellant to any just mind, in any view that can be taken of the character of Jehovah. But on the contrary, his character comprehends every conceivable, or possible excellence.

- Again. There is no just cause for hatred, in the conduct of God. There is no inconsistency, between his conduct, and his professions. Some people seem to have conceived of God, as a sly, artful, hypocritical being, who says one thing, and means another. Who professes great abhorrence of sin, yet so conducts himself, and the affairs of his kingdom, as necessarily and purposefully to produce it. Who commands men to keep his law, on pain of eternal death, and after all, prefers that they should break it. Who commands all men to repent, and believe the Gospel, yet has made atonement but for the elect. Who, while he requires them to repent, has so constituted them, that he knows they are unable to repent; professes greatly to desire the salvation of all men, and yet has suspended their salvation upon impossible conditions. Indeed, many seem to represent the conduct, and professions of God, at everlasting variance with each other; and as making up a complicated tissue, of contradiction, absurdity, and hypocrisy. But all such representations, are a libel upon his infinitely fair and upright conduct.

- Again. There is nothing unkind, or unnecessarily severe, in the conduct of God, towards the inhabitants of this world. There has been a great deal of complaint of his conduct, among sinners; they have often complained of the injustice of his dealings, and have sometimes inquired, what they had done, that he should chastise them with such severity. But all such complainings only prove their own perverseness, and can never fasten any just suspicion upon the conduct of God.

II. Sinners do hate God, because they are supremely selfish; and he is, as he ought to be, infinitely opposed to their supreme object of pursuit.

The first thing that we discover, in the conduct of little children, is, the desire of self-gratification. At what period of their existence, their desire becomes selfishness, it is impossible for us to say. That a proper desire to gratify an appetite for food, and drink, and all our constitutional appetites, is not sinful, is manifest. These appetites, have no moral character; and their proper indulgence, is not sinful. But whenever their indulgence is inordinate, or whenever the indulgence of our appetites, comes in collision with the requirements of God; whenever, and wherever we indulge our constitutional propensities, when we are under an obligation to abstain from an indulgence, in every such case, we sin;

for in all these cases we are selfish; we make our own indulgence, the rule of our duty, instead of the requirement of God. We consent to indulge ourselves, at the public expense, and in a way that is inconsistent with the glory of God, and the highest good of his universe. This is the essence, and the history of all sin. Now, at whatever period of our existence, we first prefer self-gratification, to our duty to God, when we first make self-gratification the supreme object of choice; at what particular moment self-gratification comes to be the ruling principle of our conduct, and the highest aim of our lives, it is perhaps impossible for us to determine.

But whenever this may be, this is the commencement of our depravity. It is our first moral act. It constitutes our first moral character. Every thing, that has preceded this, has had no moral character at all. The Bible assures us, that this occurs so early in our history, that it may be said, that "the wicked are estranged from the womb. That they go astray, as soon as they be born, speaking lies." This language is not, of course, to be understood literally, because we do not speak at all, as soon as we are born: but the wicked speak lies, as soon as they do speak. Behold, says the Psalmist, "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." This language also, is certainly figurative; for it cannot be possible, that the substance of a conceived fetus should be sin! This would contradict God's own definition of sin. He says, "sin is a transgression of the law;" but the law prescribes a rule of action, and not a mode of existence. If the substance of a conceived fetus is sin: if the child itself, previous to birth, is a sin, than God has committed it. All that can possibly be meant, by this, and similar passages without making utter nonsense of the word of God; without arraying different passages in everlasting contradiction to each other, is, that we were always sinners from the commencement of our moral existence. From the earliest moment of the exercise of moral agency. And to insist upon the literal understanding of such passages as these, is the most dangerous perversion of the Bible. Adopt the principle of interpretation, that insists upon these passages being understood literally, and apply it, in the exposition of the whole Bible, and you will prove, not only that sin and holiness, are substances, but that God is, a material being. Indeed, here has been the great error, on the subject of depravity. This grand rule of interpretation, that all language is to be understood, according to the nature of the subject to which it is applied, has been overlooked, and the same meaning has often been attached to the same word, whether applied to matter, or to mind. For instance, to set aside God's definition of sin, as consisting entirely in the transgression of law, and bring in those figurative expressions, that would seem, unexplained by God's own definition, to represent sin, as consisting in something else, than voluntary transgression; is to array the Scripture in irreconcilable contradiction to itself, by overlooking one of the most important rules of Biblical interpretation.

It is to trifle with the word of God. It is tempting the Holy Ghost. It is a stupid, not to say a willful perversion of the truth of God. Now, the great reason why sinners are opposed to God, is not, that there is any defect in their nature, rendering their opposition physically necessary, but because he is irreconcilably opposed to their selfishness. He is infinitely opposed to the supreme end of their pursuit, that is, to their obtaining happiness, in a way, that is inconsistent with HIS glory, and the happiness of other beings.

The supreme end, at which they aim, is to promote their own happiness, in a way that is inconsistent with the public good. To this he is infinitely opposed. As they have an unholy end, in view, the means which they use , to accomplish this end, are, of course, as wicked as the end. God is therefore, as much opposed to the means, which they use, as to the end, which they are endeavoring to accomplish by those means. These means make up the history of their lives. They are all designed, directly, or indirectly, to affect the all absorbing

object, at which the sinner aims; the promotion of his own happiness. God is therefore, as he ought to be, sincerely and conscientiously, and infinitely opposed to every thing they do or say, while in a state of inpenitency. They would make every thing subordinate to their own private interests. He insists upon it, that they shall seek their happiness, in a way that is consistent with, and calculated to promote the happiness of the whole. This is after all the only way in which, in the very nature of things they can be happy. He accordingly sets himself with full purpose of heart, to defeat every attempt which they make to obtain happiness in their own way. He is the irreconcilable adversary of all their selfish schemes. He embitters every cup of selfish joy, "turns their" selfish "council headlong; and brings down their violent dealing upon their own pate."

Thus you see that sinners hate God, because he is so holy. While they remain selfish, and he is infinitely benevolent, their characters, their designs, their desires, and all their ways are diametrically opposed to his, and his to theirs. They are direct opposites; and until they change, it will always be true as he has said, "I loathe them, and they abhor me."

Holiness, is a regard to right. God requires upon infinite penalties, that every moral being in the universe should do and feel and say, that which is perfectly right; less than this, he cannot require without injustice. But sinners are unwilling to do right. They would be at liberty to consult their own private interest in every thing, and they of course consider God as an enemy, because he insists upon their unqualified obedience to the law of right, however perfectly it counteracts their selfish schemes.

Again. Sinners hate God because he is so good. He is good and does good, and moves on in the promotion of the public interest in a way that often overturns and scatters to the winds, all their selfish projects and Babel-towers upon which they are attempting to climb to heaven. His heart is so set upon doing good, that in the prosecution of his great design, he has often overthrown families and nations that stood in his way; and once, he overwhelmed a world of sinners in a flood to prevent their mischief, and bring the world back into such a state, that, through the introduction of the law and Gospel, he might reclaim mankind, and save a multitude from hell.

Again. Sinners hate God, because he is impartial. They view their own interest as of supreme importance, and are laying themselves out to make everything in the universe bend to it. They would have the weather, the winds, and the whole material and moral universe, conform to the great object they have in view, to consummate and perpetuate their own happiness. But as God has an end in view entirely diverse from theirs; as his object is to promote the general happiness, and the happiness of individuals, only so far as is consistent with the happiness and rights of other beings, he continually thwarts them in their favorite projects. The very elements of the material universe, are so arranged and governed, as often to make shipwreck of their fondest hopes, and annihilate for even their most fondly cherished expectations.

But this is not all. Sinners hate God because he threatens to punish them for their sins. He will not compromise with them; he insists upon their obedience, or their damnation. He requests their repentance and reformation, or the everlasting destruction of their souls. Now, either alternative is supremely hateful to an impenitent sinner. To repent, heartily to confess that God is right, and he is wrong; to take God's part against himself; to give up the pursuit of his own happiness, as the supreme object of desire; to dedicate himself with all he is and has to the service of God and the promotion of the public interest; is what he is utterly unwilling to do; and inasmuch as God insists upon it, will make no compromise, but

demands unqualified and unconditional submission to his will, or the eternal damnation of his soul; the sinner is entirely unreconciled to either. He considers God as his infinite and almighty adversary, and makes war upon him with all his heart.

III. I am to show, that sinners hate God for the very reasons for which they ought to love him.

They are the very reasons for which all holy beings do love him. His opposition to all sin, and to all injurious conduct of every kind; his high regard to individual, and general happiness; and in short, all the reasons for which selfish beings are so much opposed to him, are the foundation of obligation to love him, and are the reasons why reasonable beings, that have any regard to the moral fitness of things, feel it right, and infinitely obligatory in them, to love their Maker. He deserves to be loved for these reasons, and for no other. And it is for these, and no other reasons that sinners hate him. They do not hate him because he deserves their hatred, but because he deserves their love. It is not because he is wicked, but because he is good. It is not because they have any good reason to hate him, but because they have every possible reason to love him. I mean just as I say. Sinners not only hate God, in spite of infinitely strong reasons for loving him; but for these very reasons. Not only is it true, that these reasons for loving him do not prevent their hating him, but they are the very reasons for which they hate him.

I shall conclude this discourse with several remarks.

1st. From this subject you can see the ridiculous hypocrisy of infidels. It is very common for them to profess in their investigations and inquiries after truth, to be impartial. They insist upon it that Christians are already committed, and are therefore incapable of giving Christianity a candid and unbiased examination. Christians, they say, cannot make up a judgment to be relied upon, because they are already committed in favor of Christianity. But infidels seem to suppose that they are in circumstances to make up an unbiased and enlightened judgment; and to examine and decide without prejudice. But this is utterly absurd. They are not on neutral ground, as they suppose themselves to be. They are committed against the Bible. That they are the enemies of God, is demonstrated by their conduct, entirely irrespective of the Bible. That their lives are such as no good being can approve; such as God if he is holy must abhor, is a plain matter of fact. It needs no Bible to prove this. Now, here is a book claiming to be a revelation from God, demanding of them holiness of heart and life; and threatening them for their sins with eternal death. Now, is it not absurd? Is it not ridiculous and hypocritical, for these enemies of God, committed as they are against God, and against this revelation; to set themselves up as the only impartial judges?

They can sit down to the investigation of the subject without bias. They are on neutral ground. They feel no such prepossessions as to misguide their judgment. The fact is; admitting that Christians are as much prejudiced in favor of Christianity, as infidels say they are; still, unless infidels will admit that Christians are perfect, that they are wholly sinless, and entirely devoted to God; it will appear after all, that Christians are not so liable to be prejudiced in favor of Christianity, as infidels are against it. Infidels are entirely opposed to God, and all impenitent sinners, as I have shown in the two former discourses, are totally depraved; and until Christians are entirely perfect, they will not be so completely biased in favor of God, as sinners are in favor of the devil. They will not until then of course, be so liable to misjudge in favor of the Bible, as sinners will be against it.

Christians, being upon the whole in favor of God, and therefore feeling a strong attachment to the Bible, and yet, having much remaining sin about them; and therefore liable to feel many objections to the strictness of its claims; are in the best circumstances, and in the most favorable state of mind of any beings in the world, to judge impartially. They are not so wicked as to reject what they see to be true, nor so obsequiously disposed, as blindly to submit to every thing that pretends to have a claim upon their obedience without investigation. By this I do not mean that Christians are better qualified to judge of the truth of the Christian religion, than if they were perfect; but I do mean to repel the absurd assertions of infidels, that the Christian's faith, is nothing more than a blind credulity. There never was at any time, piety enough in the church, to bear the restraints of pure Christianity, if the evidence in its favor, did not come upon them, with the power of demonstration.

2nd. From this subject you can see, that the wicked conduct of sinners is no proof that their nature is sinful. The universal sinfulness of men, has been supposed to conduct to the inevitable conclusion, that the nature of man must be in itself sinful. It has been said that in no other way, can the universal sinful conduct of men, be accounted for. It has been maintained, that an effect must be of the same nature of its cause; and that as the effects or actions of our nature are universally sinful, that therefore the nature or cause must be sinful.

But if the effect must be of the same nature of its cause, if the cause must have the same nature of the effect, then God must be a material being, for he is the cause of the existence of all matter, and therefore he must himself be material. The soul of man must also be material. It acts upon his material body, and causes his body to act upon other material things around him, and as it is constantly effecting material changes on every hand, the soul must be material. This would, indeed, be a short hand method of disposing of the existence of all spirits. But who will after all admit of this mode of argumentation, and adopt as a serious and grave truth, the absurd dogma that the character of an effect, decides in all cases the character or nature of its cause.

The universally sinful conduct of men is easily and naturally accounted for, upon the principles of this discourse. They universally adopt in the outset, the principle of selfishness as their grand rule of action, and this from the very laws of their mental constitution, vitiates all their moral conduct, and gives a sinful character to every moral action.

If it be asked how it happens that children universally adopt the principle of selfishness, unless their nature is sinful. I answer, that they adopt this principle of self gratification or selfishness; because they possess human nature, and come into being under the peculiar circumstances in which all the children of Adam are born since the fall: but not because human nature is itself sinful. The cause of their becoming sinners, is to be found in their nature's being what it is, and surrounded by the peculiar circumstances of temptation to which they are exposed in a world of sinners.

All the constitutional appetites and propensities of body and mind, are in themselves innocent; but when strongly excited are a powerful temptation to prohibited indulgence. To these constitutional appetites or propensities, so many appeals of temptation are made, as universally to lead human beings to sin. Adam was created in the perfection of manhood, certainly not with a sinful nature, and yet, an appeal to his innocent constitutional appetites led him into sin. If adult Adam, without a sinful nature, and after a season of obedience and perfect holiness, was led to change his mind by an appeal to his innocent constitutional propensities; how can the fact that infants, possessing the same nature with Adam and

surrounded by circumstances of still greater temptation, universally fall into sin, prove that their nature is itself sinful? Is such an inference called for? Is it legitimate? What, holy and adult Adam, is led, by an appeal to his innocent constitution to adopt the principle of selfishness, and no suspicion is, or can be entertained, that he had a sinful nature; but if little children under circumstances of temptation aggravated by the fall are led into sin, we are to believe that their nature is sinful! This is wonderful philosophy; and what heightens the absurdity is, that in order to admit the sinfulness of nature, we must believe sin to consist in the substance of the constitution, instead of voluntary action; which is a thing impossible.

And that which stamps the inference of a sinful nature with peculiar guilt is, that in making it we reject God's own declaration that "sin is a transgression of the law," and adopt a definition which is a perfectly absurd.

3rd. From the view of depravity presented in these discussions, it is easy to see in what sense sin is natural to sinners; and what has led mankind to ascribe the outbreakings of sin to their nature; as if their nature was itself sinful.

All experience shows, that from the laws of our constitution we are influenced in our conduct directly or indirectly by the supreme preference of our minds. In other words, when we desire a thing supremely, it is natural to us to pursue this object of desire; we may have desires for an object which we do not pursue. But it is a contradiction to say that we do not pursue the object of supreme desire. Supreme desire is nothing else than a supreme or controlling choice, and as certain as the will controls the actions; so certainly, and so naturally, shall we pursue that object which we supremely desire. The fact therefore, that sinners adopt the principle of supreme selfishness, renders it certain and natural, while their selfishness continues to be predominant, that they will sin, and only sin, and this is in strict accordance with, or rather the result of the laws of their mental constitution. While they maintain their supreme selfishness, obedience is impossible. This is the reason why "the carnal mind, or the minding of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can be." No wonder therefore, that sinners, whose supreme preference is selfish, should find it very natural for them to sin, and extremely difficult to do anything else than sin. This being a fact of universal observation, has led mankind to ascribe the sins of men to their nature; and a great deal of fault has been found with nature itself; when the fact is, that sin is only an abuse of the powers of nature. Men have very extensively overlooked the fact; that a deep seated, but voluntary preference for sin, was the foundation and fountain and cause of all other sins. The only sense in which sin is natural to men is, that it is natural for mind to be influenced in its individual exercises by a supreme preference or choice of any object. It will therefore, always be natural for a sinner to sin, until he changes the supreme preference of his mind, and prefers the glory of God and the interests of his kingdom to his own separate and opposing interests.

4th. Here you can see what a change of heart is. Its nature, its necessity, and the obligation of the sinner immediately to change it. You can see also that the first act which the sinner will, or can perform, that can be acceptable to God, must be to change his heart, or the supreme controlling preference of his mind.

5th. Perhaps someone will object and say if infants are not born with a sinful nature, how then are they saved by grace? But I ask in return, if they are born with a sinful nature, how are they saved by grace? Does God create an infant a sinner, and then call it grace to save him from the sinfulness of a nature of his own creation? Absurd and blasphemous. What!

represent the ever blessed God as either directly creating a sinful nature, or as establishing such an order of things that a nature in itself sinful would by physical necessity descend from Adam, and then call that grace by which the infant is saved! (not from its conduct, but from its nature!)

But let us look at this. Here are two systems; the one maintains that infants have no moral character at all, until they have committed actual transgression. That their first moral actions are invariably sinful, but that previous to moral action they are neither sinful nor holy. That as they have no moral character they deserve neither praise nor blame; neither life nor death at the hand of God. God might annihilate them without injustice, or he may bestow upon them eternal life as a free and unearned gift.

The other system maintains that infants have a sinful nature which they have inherited from Adam. The scriptures maintain that all who are ever saved of the human family, must be saved by grace; and those who maintain the system that the nature of infants is itself sinful, suppose that upon their system alone is it possible to ascribe the salvation of infants, who die before actual transgression to grace. But let us for a few moments examine these systems. Grace is evidently used in different senses in the Bible. It is sometimes synonymous with holiness. To grow in grace, is to grow in holiness. Its most common import seems to be that of unmerited favor. It is sometimes used in a wider sense, and includes the idea of mercy or forgiveness. Now, when infants die previous to actual transgression, it is impossible to ascribe their salvation to grace, in any other sense, than that of undeserved, or unearned favor. If they have never sinned, it is impossible that they should be saved by grace, if we include in the term grace, the idea of mercy or forgiveness. To assert that a child can be pardoned for having a sinful nature, is to talk ridiculous nonsense: and it is only in the sense of undeserved favor, excluding the idea of mercy or pardon, that an infant, dying before actual transgression, can be said to be saved by grace. In this sense, his salvation is by grace. He has never earned eternal life; he has never done anything, by which he has laid God under any obligation to save him, and God might, without any injustice, annihilate him. But if it please him for the sake of Christ, as I fully believe it does, to confer eternal life upon one whom he might without any injustice annihilate, it is conferring upon him infinite favor. But let us look at the other system for a moment. This denies that infants have a sinful nature, and rejects the monstrous dogma that God has created the nature sinful, and then pretends to save the infant from a nature of his own creation by grace, as if the infant deserved damnation for being what God made it. Those that hold this scheme insist that there is as much grace in the salvation of infants, upon their view of the subject, as upon the impossible dogma of a sinful nature. The fact is, that the very existence of the whole race of man, is a mere matter of grace; having reference to the atonement of Jesus Christ. Had it not been for the contemplated atonement, Adam and Eve would have been sent to hell at once, and never have had any posterity. The race could never have existed. There never could have been any infants, or adults (Adam and Eve excepted,) had it not been for the grace of Christ in interposing in behalf of man by his atonement. it was doubtless in anticipation of this, and on account of it, that Adam and Eve were spared and the sentence of the law not instantly executed upon them. Now every infant owes its very existence to the grace of God in Jesus Christ, and if it dies previous to actual transgression, it is just as absolutely indebted to Christ for eternal life, as if it had been the greatest sinner on earth. On neither of these schemes, does the grace which saves infants include the idea of pardon - but on both of them they are saved by grace, inasmuch as they owe their very existence to the atonement of Christ; and in both cases are delivered from circumstances under which it is certain had they lived to form a moral character, they would have sinned, and deserved eternal death. To think, therefore, of objecting to the view of depravity that I have given in these discourses,

that it denies the grace of God in the salvation of infants, is either to misconceive, or willfully to misrepresent the sentiments that I have advocated. I desire to ask, and I wish that it may be answered, if it can be; wherein there is any more grace displayed in the salvation of infants, upon the one system than upon the other. Will it be said that if the nature of infants be sinful, grace must change their nature, and that there is this difference; that although in neither case does the infant need a pardon, yet in the one case his nature needs to be changed, and not in the other? But if his nature needs to be changed. I deny that this is an act of grace; if God has made his nature wrong and incapable of performing any but sinful actions, he is bound to change it. It is consummate trifling to call this grace - to cause a being to come into existence with a sinful or defective nature and then call it grace to alter this nature and make it as it should have been at first, is to trifle with serious things and talk deceitfully for God.

6th. Again. The hatred of sinners is cruel. It is as God says, "rendering hatred for his love." He is love, and this is the reason and the only reason why they hate him. Mark, it is not because they overlook the fact that he is infinitely benevolent. It is not merely in the face of this fact, that for other reasons they hate him; but it is because of this fact. It is literally and absolutely rendering hatred for his love. He is opposed to their injuring each other. He desires their happiness and is infinitely opposed to their making themselves miserable. He is infinitely more opposed to their doing any thing that will prove injurious to themselves, than an earthly parent was to that course of conduct in his beloved child, which he foresaw would ruin him. His heart yearns with infinitely more than parental tenderness. He expostulates with sinners and says, "O do not that abominable thing that I hate." "How shall I give thee up Ephriam? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together."

He feels all the gushings of a father's tenderness, and all the opposition of a father to any course that will injure his offspring, and as children will sometimes hate, and revile their parents for opposing their wayward courses to destruction, so sinners hate God, more than they hate all other beings, because he is infinitely more opposed to their destroying their souls.

7th. The better God is, the more sinners hate him. The better he is, the more he is opposed to their selfishness: and the more he opposes their selfishness, while they remain selfish, the more they are provoked with him.

In my second discourse on depravity, I showed that men hate God supremely. The only reason is because his excellence is supreme excellence. His goodness is unmingled goodness, and therefore their hatred is unmingled enmity. If there were any defect in his character, men would not hate him so much. If God were not perfectly ,yea infinitely good, men might not be totally depraved, I mean, they might not be totally opposed to his character; but because his character has no blemish, therefore they sincerely, cordially, and perfectly hate him.

8th. Again. The more he tries to do them good, while they remain impenitent, the more they will hate him. While they retain their selfishness, all his efforts to restrain it, to hedge them in, to prevent the accomplishment of their selfish desires; the more he interposes to tear away their idols; to wean them from the world, the more he embitters every cup of joy with which they attempt to satisfy themselves, the more means he uses to reclaim, and sanctify and save; if their selfishness remain unbroken, the more deeply and eternally will they hate

him.

9th. This conduct in sinners is infinitely blame worthy and deserves eternal death. It is impossible to conceive of guilt more deep and damning than that of sinners under the Gospel. They sin under circumstances so peculiar, than their guilt is more aggravated than that of devils. Devils have broken the law and so have you sinners. But devils never rejected the Gospel. They have been guilty of rebellion and so have you. But they have never rejected the offer of pardon and spurned, as with their feet, the offer of eternal life through the atoning blood of the Son of God. If you sinners do not deserve eternal death, I cannot conceive that there is a devil in hell that deserves it. And yet, strange to tell, sinners often speak as if it were doubtful whether they deserve to be damned.

10th. It is easy to see from this subject, that saints and angels will be entirely satisfied with the justice of God in the damnation of sinners. They will never take delight in the misery of the damned, but in the display of justice, in the vindication of his insulted majesty and injured honor, in the respect which punishment will create for the law and character of God, they will have pleasure; they will see that the display of his justice is glorious, and will cry halleluia, while "the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever."

SERMON VII.

GOD CANNOT PLEASE SINNERS.

-- Luke vii. 31-35.--

"And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

This lecture was typed in by Michael and Pam Burns.

It would seem, as if God designed, in his dealings with men, to leave them without excuse. He uses such a variety of instrumentality to reclaim and save them, that it appears as if he meant to try every possible means of winning them away from death, that he may give them eternal life.

John the Baptist, was an austere man: he seems to have had very little intercourse with the people, except in his public capacity as a prophet. His message seems to have been that of reproof and rebuke in a high degree. His diet was locusts and wild honey; and he seems to have practised a high degree of austerity, in all his habits of living. He did not visit Jerusalem as a public teacher, but continued in the wildest parts of Judea, to which places the people flocked, to listen to his instruction. His habits of life; his style of preaching; his abstaining in a great measure from intercourse with the people; led his enemies to say, that

he had a bad spirit; and that so far he was from being a good man he was possessed with the devil.

After the Scribes and Pharisees had declined receiving his doctrine, under the pretense that he had a devil: Jesus Christ began his public, and in his habits of life, and intercourse with the people, differed widely from John the Baptist. Instead of confining himself to the wilderness of Judea, he visited most of the principle places, and especially spent considerable time at Jerusalem as a public teacher. He was affable in his deportment; mingled with great ease, and holy civility, with almost all classes of persons, for the purpose of instructing them in the great doctrines of salvation. He did not hesitate to comply with the invitations of the Pharisees, and great men of the nation to dine with them; and on all occasions was forward in administering such reproof, and instruction, as was suited to the circumstances and characters of those with whom he associated. But when the Pharisees listened to his doctrines, they were filled with indignation, and seized hold of the easy and gentlemanly manner in which he accommodated himself to all classes of people that he might give them instruction, and objected to him that he was a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. They objected to John, that he was morose and sour, that he had a denunciatory spirit, and was therefore possessed with the devil: and to Christ they objected, that he was on the opposite extreme; that he too was affable and familiar with all classes of people: that he was not only a gluttonous man, and a win-bibber; but that he was the friend of publicans and sinners. It was this inconsistency in them, that drew forth from Christ the words of the text. An evident allusion is made, in the words of the text, to Eastern customs; to their seasons of festivity and dancing on the one hand; and to their loud lamentation and mournings, on funeral occasions, on the other. It is common, as every one knows, for little children to copy, in their plays, those things which they see in adult persons. When they witness seasons of festivity, piping, and dancing, they get something that will answer as an instrument of music, and go forth piping and dancing, in imitation of what they have seen. So on the other hand, when they have witnessed funeral occasions, on which, mourning men and women, as is common in the East; by their loud wailings, have excited great lamentations among the spectators; they too, have attempted to copy this also. The conduct of the Scribes and Pharisees is compared to children, who sit in the marketplaces, and complain of their little playfellows as morose and sour, and not willing to play with them, play what they would. When they imitated festivity and dancing, their playfellows were solemn and reserved, and did not seem disposed to merriment. And when they attempted to play something that was more agreeable to their humour, and mourned and wailed unto them as if at a funeral, then they were disposed to be merry. We have piped unto you (say they), and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. And when Christ had thus represented the testy conduct of these children, he presses his hearers with the application, "for John the Baptist came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil. The Son of Man is come, eating and drinking, and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

In speaking from these words, I design, to illustrate the following proposition---That God Cannot Please Sinners.

Some people are apt to imagine that it is a misrepresentation of God's character that creates so much opposition to him in this world. Sometimes, it is true, that his character is greatly misrepresented, and when his character is thus misrepresented the consciences of men are opposed to him; but they are no better pleased when his character is truly represented; for then, their hearts are opposed to him.

It is matter of fact, that only needs to be stated, to be admitted, that upon the subject of religion, the heart and the conscience of impenitent sinners, are opposed to each other. That which their hearts love, their consciences condemn, and that which their consciences approve, their hearts hate. Their consciences approve the character of God, as it is; but to this character their hearts are utterly opposed, as I have shown when treating upon the subject of total depravity, in No. 5 of this series. If the character of God should be so altered, as to conciliate and please their wicked heart; their conscience would condemn it.

In illustration of the proposition, "that God cannot please sinners." I observe in the

- 1st. Place, that sinners do not like the holiness of God, nor would they like him if he were unholy.

  To the holiness of God their hearts are bitterly opposed. To deny this is as absurd as it is false. To maintain that an impenitent heart is not opposed to holiness, is the same as to maintain that an impenitent heart is not impenitent. Impenitence is the love of sin. But sin and holiness are direct opposites. To say then, that an impenitent heart is not opposed to holiness, is to say that opposites are not opposites. God is infinitely holy, and therefore the impenitent heart is wholly opposed to him. But suppose he was infinitely sinful; would sinners be better pleased with him than they are at present? No. They would then make war upon him because he was so wicked. Their consciences would then condemn him, and although their hearts would be conciliated, their conscience, and their better judgment would be utterly opposed to him. Men are so constituted, that they cannot approve the character of a wicked being. No man ever approved of the character of the devil: and wicked men are opposed to both God and the devil, for opposite reasons. They hate God with their hearts because he is so holy; and in their consciences condemn the devil, because he is so wicked. Now suppose you place the character of God at any point between the two extremes of infinite holiness and infinite sinfulness; and sinners would not, upon the whole, be better pleased with him than they are now. In just as far as he was holy, their hearts would hate him. In just as far as he was wicked, their consciences would condemn him. So that he does not please them as he is, nor would he please them if he should change.

- Again. Sinners do not like the mercy of God; in view of the conditions upon which it is to be exercised, nor would they like him if he were unmerciful.

  If they liked his mercy with its conditions, they would accept forgiveness; and would no longer be impenitent sinners. This is matter of fact. But if he were unmerciful, then they would certainly be opposed to him.

- Again. They do not like the precept of his law, as it is, nor would they approve of it if it were altered. When they behold its perfection, their hearts rise up against it. But if it were imperfect, and allowed of some degree of sin, their consciences would condemn it. Let the precept of the law remain as it is, or alter it as you will; and sinners are and will be displeased. The law now requires perfect holiness; and for this reason the sinner's heart is entirely opposed to it. But suppose it required entire sinfulness; then his conscience would utterly condemn it. Let it be of a mixed character, and require

some holiness, and some sin; and in as far as it requires holiness, their heart would hate it; and in as far as it required sin, their conscience would condemn it. So upon the whole, they would be as far from being satisfied, as they are now.

- Again. Sinners do not like the penalty of the law as it is; nor would they approve of it, if it were altered. The heart of sinners rises into most outrageous rebellion, when the penalty of eternal death is held out to their view. But if the penalty were less, their consciences would condemn it. Then they would say the penalty was not equal to the importance of the precept. That as the importance of the precept was infinite; it is a plain matter of common sense that the penalty is infinite. That God was under an obligation in justice, to apportion the penalty to the importance of the precept. Furthermore, they would say that God had not done all the nature of the case admitted, to prevent the commission of sin. That he had not presented the highest motives to obedience, that could be presented; nor such motives as the nature of the case demanded: that therefore he was deficient in benevolence, and even wanting in common honesty and justice. Now, place the penalty of this law at any point between eternal death and no penalty at all, and the sinner is not satisfied.

If you make it less than eternal death, you offend his conscience; and if you let it remain as it is, you offend his heart.

- Again. Sinners do not like the Gospel as it is, nor would they be better satisfied, if it were altered.

1st. They do not like the rule of conduct which it prescribes, now would they be satisfied if it prescribed any other rule. It requires that men should be holy, as God is holy: and requires the same strictness and perfection, as does the moral law. But this is a great offence to their hearts. Suppose it prescribed a different rule of conduct, and lowered its claim as to suit the sinful inclinations of men; then their consciences would oppose it.

What, they would say, is the Gospel to repeal the moral law? Does it make Christ the minister of sin? Is it arrayed against the government of God, and does it permit rebellion against his throne? What sort of Gospel is this? To this their consciences would entirely object.

Again. Sinners do not like the conditions of the Gospel, now would they be satisfied, if they were altered. The conditions are, repentance and faith: but to these, the sinner's heart is opposed. To hate his sins; to trust in Christ, for salvation; is asking too much, to obtain the consent of his heart. But suppose the Gospel offered to pardon and save, without repentance and faith: tho this the sinner's conscience, and his common sense would object. What, he would say; shall the Gospel offer pardon while they continue their rebellion? Shall men be saved in their sins? It is absurd and impossible. And shall men be saved without faith in Christ? Shall they be received and pardoned, while they make God a liar? Shall they go to heaven without believing there is a heaven? Shall they escape hell when they do not believe there is a hell? Shall they ever find their way to everlasting life, when they have no confidence in the testimony of God; and will not walk in the only way that will conduct them there?

Impossible. A Gospel that pretends to save on such conditions must be from hell.

Now suppose you let the conditions of the Gospel remain as they are, or alter them in any possible way; and the sinner is not satisfied. They commend themselves to his conscience as they are, but they are a great offence to his heart. Alter them, so as to conciliate his heart, and you offend his conscience; and while the sinner remains impenitent, there is no conceivable alternation that would please him.

The fact is, that sinners are at continual war with themselves. Their hearts and consciences are in perpetual opposition to each other. One view of a subject will please their hearts, and offend their consciences; and another view of it, will satisfy their consciences, but arouse the enmity of their hearts; and while they are in this state, it is plainly impossible to please them.

Again. Sinners do not like the means of grace, as they are, nor would they be satisfied, if any other means were used to save them. They do not like the doctrines that ministers preach, when they preach the truth, now would they be satisfied if they preached error.

If they come out with the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and bear down upon the hearts and consciences of men with the claims of God, their hearts arise in instant rebellion. This say they, is an abominable doctrine. But if the minister lets down the high claims of the Gospel, their conscience is dissatisfied; and the sinner if he is well instructed says, that the minister is afraid to tell the truth; that he is daubing with untempered mortar; that he is deceiving the people and leading them down to hell.

Now, whether the minister preaches the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; or error, and nothing but error; or a mixture of truth and falsehood; in just as far as he preaches the truth; the sinner's heart opposes: and whenever he preaches what the sinner knows to be error, his conscience condemns it. So let the minister preach what he will; while the sinner is impenitent, he will not upon the whole be satisfied.

Again. Sinners do not like the manner of ministers preaching as it is, nor would they be satisfied if their manner was different. If the minister's manner is rousing, and pointed; pungent and impressive; the sinner's heart rises up against it. If it is lazy and cold and dry, his conscience condemns it. In the first case, the sinner says, he is an enthusiast, and a madman, that he appeals to the passions, and excites a great deal of animal feeling; that he frightens the women and children, and will drive people to madness. In the latter case, he says that he preaches the people all to sleep. That he is prosing, and dull, and does not believe the Gospel himself. Now let the minister's manner be wholly right, or wholly wrong, or a mixture of right and wrong; and the sinner is not satisfied. In so far as the manner is right, his conscience takes sides against it: and while the sinner is so inconsistent with himself, it is vain to hope to please him.

Again. Sinners do not like the lives of ministers, as they are, nor would they be satisfied if they lived differently. If the minister is determined to know nothing among his people, save Jesus Christ and him crucified: if he make religion his entire business; and introduce his message on all occasions; the sinner's heart is filled with indignation: Says he is a great bigot; full of superstition; or a canting hypocrite; that he is not sociable, and affable as a minister ought to be; that he takes no interest in the common concerns of men; that he is entirely unacquainted with human nature; that he is always intruding his religion upon every body: and he thinks, for his part, that a minister would do a great deal more good, to be a little more like other people. But if on the other hand, the minister associates with the world like other people; takes an interest in the passing occurrences of the day: if he interests himself in politics; reads secular news, and books: relates anecdotes, and is cheerful, and companionable; and at home among his people, on all occasions; then the sinner's conscience condemns him. O he says, I don't see that he is any better than any body else; he is not what a minister should be, but is fond of politics, and as much interested in the business of this world, as other people are. I like to see a minister confine himself to the duties of his office. Now, let the minister live as he will; wholly right, or wholly wrong, and the sinner is displeased. But suppose there be a mixture of consistency and inconsistency, or right and wrong, in a minister's life; then they say, he is not at all what he should be; that he is sometimes very hot, and sometimes very cold; that he is sometimes all religion, and sometimes no religion; that sometimes his conversation is all upon religious subjects, and sometimes all upon the world; they think this inconsistency calculated to do a great deal of hurt: for their part, they like to see a minister consistent and be always the same. Now, it is evident, that while the sinner is so inconsistent with himself, he will be displeased with the lives of ministers, let them live as they may. As far as the minister lives as he ought, the impenitent heart, loathes him; and in as far as he lives as he ought not; the conscience condemns him.

Again. Sinners do not like the conduct of Christians, as it is, nor would they be satisfied if it were different. When Christians are very much engaged in religion, have a great many meetings, and make great efforts to save souls of men, the hearts of sinners are very much disturbed. They call them enthusiasts, and hypocrites, and think they had much better attend to their worldly business, lest their families should come upon the town. They do not thank them for their impertinence in visiting from house to house, and intruding their religion upon all their neighbors: and if Christians are opposed to balls and parties, and all kinds of sinful amusements; then they say they are morose and sour, and misanthropic; are opposed to all the sympathies, and courtesies of life; and that they want to render every body else, as morose, and sour, and unhappy in themselves--that they had better be engaged in something else, than in muttering their prayers, running to meetings, and exhorting their neighbors to repent, as if nobody had any religion but themselves. But, if on the other hand, Christians say but little about religion, attend meeting but seldom, except on the Sabbath; engage as deeply in business as worldly men; and appear to enjoy parties of pleasure, and time-killing amusements; now they say, these professors of

religion are all hypocrites: what do they more than others? They care nothing about the souls of their neighbors. They neither warn, nor exhort them; nor live as if they believed there was a heaven or a hell. If these are Christians, I want no such religion as this. So that is Christians live right or wrong, sinners are not satisfied. Of if there is a mixture of good and evil in their lives, they are no better pleased. If sometimes Christians are awake, and at other times asleep; if sometimes they do their duty, and at other times neglect it; sinners say, that their inconsistency is a great stumbling-block; that they don't like this periodical religion; that is one day all zeal, and the next all coldness and death. The truth is, if they are engaged, the sinner's heart is disturbed; and if they are cold, his conscience gives sentence against them. If they are neither cold nor hot, in just as far as they are warm, their hearts oppose; and in as far as they are cool, their consciences condemn; and who can please them?

Again. Sinners are displeased if the church exercise discipline, and turn out unworthy members; and they are also displeased, if they do not do it. If a church suffer disorderly and wicked persons in their communion, their consciences are opposed to this. They say these church members are all hypocrites, to sanction such conduct as this. What! Have fellowship with such persons? The church can never prosper while they retain in their communion such hypocrites. By having fellowship with them, they show that they approve their deeds. But, if on the other hand, the church rise up and excommunicate these offending members, then their hearts are disturbed. They maintain that the church are persecuting some of its best members. They think that the proceedings of the church are very uncharitable to deal thus with persons, who for aught they can see, are as good as any persons in the church. Cases of this kind have occurred, where the excommunicated members have been advised, by the ungodly, to prosecute the church for slander. The truth is, that while sinners continue to be so inconsistent with themselves, nothing, upon the subject of religion, can please them. What is right offends their hearts; and what is wrong offends their consciences.

I shall conclude this subject with several remarks:

1st. From what has been said, you can see why it is that sinners find it impossible to rest in any form of error, until their consciences become seared as with a hot iron. It is affecting to see, how many persons there are, who are making continual efforts to hide themselves behind some refuge of lies. These errors are congenial to their feelings, and they want to believe them: and in the excitement of debate, or in view of some glowing exhibition of their error, when it is exhibited, as if it were sober truth, they feel as if they did believe it; and while the excitement lasts they seem to rest in it. But when the tumult of feeling subsides, and an enlightened conscience can gain a hearing, it gives forth the sentence of condemnation against their favorite heresy. Conscience comes forth and writes "falsehood" upon the very head and front of it. This leads the heart to mutiny, and an internal struggle and war is created, from which it would seem that the sinner can only escape by working himself into such an excitement, as to lose sight of Scripture, and reason and common sense: and thus in the wild uproar of his tumultuous feelings drown the voice of conscience, and for the time being feel measurably quiet in his sins. Thus you will see Universalists, and

errorists of almost every description courting debate; they seem to be unhappy unless they can be engaged in some exciting conversation that will drown the voice of conscience. But until by utter violence they have put conscience to silence, they can never rest quietly in any form of error when they have been rightly instructed. It is in vain for them to expect to bring an enlightened conscience to take sides against truth, and against God. God has not left himself without a witness in the sinner's breast; and however much his warring passions, and his desperate heart, may mutiny against high heaven, he may rest assured, that conscience will write out, and sign and seal his death-warrant; and often in anticipation of coming retribution, hand him over to the executioner of eternal justice.

Again. You can see, from this subject, why it is that sinners will at one time praise, and at another censure the same thing. There is a sinner goes to hear a minister preach who daubs with untempered mortar; whose velvet lips utter the honied words of deceitfulness and guile; who puts darkness for light, and light for darkness; who makes falsehood appear like truth, and truth like falsehood; and whose flowing eloquence is like one who has a pleasant voice, and can play well upon an instrument. He conceals the sinner's danger. He says nothing of his guilt. "He strengthens the hands of the wicked that he shall not turn from his wicked way, by promising him life."O, says the sinner, what a charming preacher. His feelings are enlisted; he is almost in a rapture. He goes home pouring forth the most enthusiastic commendations of the sermon. But let his feelings subside; let him have time for reflection; and when he has thought, he will change his tune: and when speaking the sober dictates of his conscience, he will condemn the preacher and his sermon, as calculated to bewitch and deceive, rather than to reform and save.

Again. Let him hear a minister who brings the truth of God to bear with the most impressive pungency upon the hearts and consciences of men, and his heart rises in rebellion; and while under the excitement, he will pour out execrations upon the minister and his sermon, and declare that he will never hear him preach again. He is ready to quarrel with every body that will justify the sermon or the preacher. But let him have time to cool; let the lawless perturbations of his bosom cease. Let conscience gain a hearing, and you will find him speaking a different language. Let the same preacher have an appointment in his neighborhood, and you will find him at the house of God. He will say, after all, I may as well go; the man preached the truth, and I may as well hear it as not. Though I was angry at his doctrine, I cannot but respect his honesty; I will go once more and hear what he has to say. Now in one of these cases the sinner speaks the language of his heart; and in the other the language of his conscience.

II. From this subject, you can see, that a minister whose preaching pleases the hearts of sinners, cannot commend himself to their consciences in the sight of God. Many ministers seem to aim at conciliating the feelings of the impenitent part of their congregation. They seem to consider it an evidence of their wisdom and prudence, that their preaching has so much favour with the ungodly. Now let these sinners be converted, and they will lose their confidence in such a minister. Their consciences, if enlightened, have never been satisfied with him. They have praised his preaching, and loved to hear him, because he has commended himself to their hearts, and not because he has commended himself to their consciences. If then, they are ever truly converted, and their hearts are brought over to take sides with their conscience, it is highly probable that they will go away and join some other congregation, if another is within their reach; and where in such cases they do not do this, there is reason to fear that they are not truly converted. But where a ministry preaches to the conscience, and sinners get angry and go away, if ever they are converted they will desire to come back again, and set under the preaching that used so to disturb them while in their

sins.

III. From this subject, you can see, that where Christians try to gain influence with sinners, by bringing down their religion so as to conciliate their feelings while in their sins, they will never by this kind of influence do the sinner any good. For while by this course they please the heart of sinners their consciences condemn them; and while their consciences condemn the course they take, it is impossible that this course should do them any good.

Many persons are attempting to gain influence with people in high life, by imitating them, and conforming their lives and habits, and equipage, to their taste and mode of living. In this way they seem to think that they shall gain access to them, and influence over them. But it is certain, that the access and influence they will thus gain, will never do the sinner any good; because this whole course of conduct, by which this influence is gained, is condemned by the sinner's conscience. It is not a religious, but a worldly influence, that is thus gained. It is not a sanctified, but a sinful influence. And instead of giving the person's character who takes this course, weight, as a Christian, it has directly the opposite effect; and destroys the confidence of the sinner, that he is a Christian. By taking this proud and worldly course to gain influence, he may conciliate the sinner's feelings, and commend himself to his heart, but the sinner's conscience repels and condemns him.

IV. God, so speaks and conducts, as to commend himself to every man's conscience. The sinner's heart is entirely opposed to God; but God pursues such a course, as not to leave himself without a witness in the sinner's breast. Conscience will testify for God. Now, it is certain, that the sinner's heart must be reconciled to God, or he is eternally miserable; his judgment and conscience, will always bear witness that God is right; and unless the heart is brought over to take sides with conscience, it is self-evident that the sinner must be damned.

V. Ministers, and Christians should take the same course that God does. Should so live and speak, as to commend themselves to the sinner's conscience.

If we live so as to have the sinner's conscience on our side, however much he may hate us now, it is certain, that he must love us, or he must be damned. If we have done that which his conscience approve, he must be reconciled to us, or God will never be reconciled to him.

VI. You see from this subject, why it is that where persons are converted, they often manifest the greatest attachment to those Christians whom they most hated, previous to their conversion. Those Christians that lead the most holy lives, are most apt to be hated by impenitent sinners; and it often happens, that the more they reprove and warn and rebuke them; the more sinners will hate them. But if those sinners become truly converted, you will always see that they have the most confidence in those very persons; the reason is, their hearts are changed. Their conscience took part with the faithful Christian before; and now they are converted, both heart and conscience approve his character.

VII. You see, from this subject, why it is that when persons are converted, they manifest the least attachment for, and the least confidence in, those professors of religion with whom they were most intimate while in their sins. Those persons with whom they were most pleased, while in this state of impenitency; were agreeable to them, not because they had so much piety, but because they had so little. Not because they did their duty to them so faithfully, but because the neglected it. Now when they are converted, they cannot have

much confidence in the piety of those professors with whom they used to have this kind of worldly intimacy. They cannot, for their lives, help suspecting that they have no piety. In some cases a husband or wife, who was a professor of religion, has so lived, and so concealed their light as to please their unconverted companion. If, in such a case, the husband or wife becomes truly converted, rest assured, there will be but little Christian confidence between the young convert, and the old professor in this case. In some cases, husbands have said, after their conversion, that they have very little confidence in their wife's religion, because she never manifested religion enough to disturb them in their sins.

VIII. You see, from this subject, that temporising with sinners; letting down, concealing, or evading the claims of the Gospel, can do them no good. To attempt to please them, while in their sins, is but to ruin them, if we succeed. Their hearts must be changed; and the only way to effect this, is by taking the deepest hold upon conscience, that is possible. Instead of expecting to change the heart, by concealing the offensive features of the Gospel, we need only expect to change it, by spreading out before the conscience, the claims of God, in all their length and breadth. The heart is to be brought over, through instrumentality of conscience, and the more fully the claims of God are represented to the conscience, the more likely the sinner is to be converted.

To conceal the truth from conscience, and attempt to win the sinner over by a lovely song; is but to lull him with a syren's voice, until he plunges into eternal death.

IX. You see from this subject, why it is that convicted sinners often manifest the greatest opposition, just before they submit to God. It is often the case, that the more conscience is pressed, the more the sinner is fretted, and the more he will rebel; and when the conscience is thoroughly enlightened, and has obtained a firm footing, so as to exert its utmost power upon the heart; a desperate and outrageous conflict often ensues; and in the madness of his exasperated feelings, the sinner is sometimes almost ready to blaspheme the God of heaven. And it is often observed, that sinners will be the most high-handed in the outbreakings of their enmity, while conscience is taking its most thorough lessons, from the truth and Spirit of God. But when feeling has in a measure exhausted its turbulence, the power of truth, presented by the Spirit of God, exerts upon the heart such tremendous power, through the conscience, as to make the sinner quail ---throw down his weapons, and submit to God.

X. From this subject, you can see the long-suffering of God in sparing sinners. How amazing it is, that he spares them so long, notwithstanding all their unreasonable fault-finding and rebellion. Nothing that he does pleases them, and nothing that he can do would please them. What would you think of your children, if they should conduct in such a manner towards you. Suppose they had never obeyed you, and had never so much as meant to obey you. When you have conducted in such a way as to commend yourself to their consciences, their hearts opposed you; and when you have commended yourself to their hearts, their consciences opposed you; so that upon the whole you have not, and cannot please them. They are always displeased, and murmuring at whatever you do. O how little patience would the kindest earthly parents have with their children, when compared with the long-suffering of the blessed God.

XI. You see that it is of no use for God to try to please you, sinner, while you are in your sins. He cannot please you if he would, and he would not please you if he could while you remain in sin. Sinners often seem to imagine, that if God was such a being, as they would have him, they should love him. They do not realize, that if they framed a God to suit their hearts, they would fail of appeasing their consciences. Sinner, your conscience approves of

the character of God as it is. If his character could be altered in any conceivable degree, it would upon the whole please you no better than it does now, while you are in your sins; for if you could alter his character so as to satisfy your heart, you would only outrage your conscience; and the only possible way for you to be happy is, to change yourself, instead of expecting or desiring that God should change.

XII. The necessity of a change of heart is self-evident. It is a fact of universal experience that the consciences and hearts of sinners are opposed to each other; and this is true even where the light of the Gospel has never shone. That men in following the inclination of their hearts, have violated their consciences, is known and acknowledged by every nation under heaven. This they have acknowledged in the most public manner by the expiatory sacrifices which they have offered to appease their offended gods. However absurd and foolish their ideas of God have been, yet their sacrifices show that they have violated their consciences; and there is probably not a man on earth who can honestly say, that in the indulgence of his heart he has not violated his conscience.

An enlightened conscience will never change. Its testimony will be louder and louder in favour of truth for ever. There must be a change or there can be no inward peace; and this change must plainly be in the heart, and not in the conscience.

XIII. It is in vain for sinners to wait for God to use means that suit them better, before they are converted.

Most sinners are waiting to hear some different kind of preaching; and sometimes they will pass through one revival after another, because the means, as they think, are not adapted to their case. Sometimes they hear preaching that pleases their hearts, but then their consciences are not enough impressed, to do them any good. And then again, they hear preaching that impresses their consciences; but their hearts rise up in rebellion.

Now if they could only hear some preaching, or God could use some means, that they would please both their conscience and their heart, they think they should be converted. But such means cannot possibly be used while the heart, and conscience are opposed to each other. Sinner, there is no use in your waiting. To expect God, or any body else, to satisfy you before you are converted, is vain; and if you wait for such an event you will wait, until you are in the depths of hell.

XIV. Sinners ought not to desire that means should be used to please their hearts, while they are in their sins. If any preaching, or means, make you feel pleasantly; if your heart is delighted with it, rest assured, that these means will do you no good. They will only deceive you, and make you overlook the necessity of a change of heart.

XV. You can see the nature of hell torments.

Sinners are often thrown into great agony in this life, by the internal struggles, and janglings of their consciences and hearts. Now let them go into eternity with their hearts unchanged. Let the full blaze of eternity's light be poured upon their consciences; and with a heart at enmity against God, what horrible rebellion, what insupportable conflicting, and quarreling with self, and with God, will the sinner experience.

With a conscience that sternly takes the part of God; and a heart that supremely hates him, what a fire of hell will such a conflict kindle up in the sinner's breast.

Lastly. Sinners should not follow their feelings, but obey the voice of conscience. In other cases, where sinners find their feelings, opposed to their better judgement, they will often set down their foot, and resist the current of their feelings. They will say, I am not going to be carried away, and throw up the reins to my feelings, I must exercise my judgment. I must act like a reasonable being. But oh, on the subject of religion, how perfectly men give themselves up to their wicked hearts. Sinner, you ought this moment to come forth promptly, and act like a man, and say you will not go another step in the way of death. Why throw up the reigns, and give loose to passion? Why drive with such furious haste to hell? Why suffer yourself to be carried hither and thither, by every gush of feeling, and by every breathe of emotion that passes over the surface of your soul? Why sinner, if you do not exercise your reason; if you do not listen to the voice of conscience; if you do not gather up the reigns; gird up your loins, and address yourself to the work of your salvation like a man. If you do not make up your mind to resist the whole tide of your carnal feelings, and put yourself under the clear blaze of heaven's light; and when conscience gives forth its verdict, unless you will promptly obey, you must die in your sins; and now will you here, in the house of God, while your character, and danger are before you; while mercy waits to save, and death brandishes his weapon to destroy, while heaven calls, and hell groans; while the spirit strives, and Christians pray, will you have the moral courage; the decision of character, the honesty, and manhood, to resolve on immediate submission to Jesus Christ?

SERMON VIII.

CHRISTIAN AFFINITY.

-- Amos iii. 3.--
"Can two walk together except they be agreed?"

This lecture was typed in by Michael and Pam Burns.

In the holy scriptures, we often find a negative thrown into the form of an interrogation. The text is an instance of this kind: so that we are to understand the prophet as affirming that two cannot walk together except they be agreed.

For two to be agreed, implies something more than to be agreed in theory, or in understanding: for we often see persons who agree in theory, but who differ vastly in feeling and practice. Their understandings may embrace the same truth, while their hearts and practice will be very differently affected by them. Saints and sinners often embrace in theory the same religious creed, while it is plain that they differ widely in feeling and practice.

We have reason to believe that holy angels and devils apprehend and embrace intellectually the same truths, and yet how very differently are they affected by them!

These different effects, produced in different minds by the same truths, are owing to the different state of the heart or affections of the different individuals. Or, in other words, the

difference in the effect consists in the different manner in which the person receives these truths, or feels and acts in view of them. It is to be observed also, that the same things and truths will affect the same mind very differently at different times. This too is owing to the different state of the affections at these times. Or rather this difference consists in the different manner in which the mind acts at these times. All pleasure and pain---all happiness and misery---all sin and holiness---have their seat in, and belong to, the heart or affections. All the satisfaction or dissatisfaction, pain or pleasure, depends entirely upon the state of our affections at the time, and consists in these affections. If it fall in with, and excite, and feed pleasurable affections, we are pleased of course; for in these pleasurable affections our pleasure or happiness consists. The higher, therefore, these affections are elevated by the presentation of any thing or any truth to our minds, the greater our pleasure is. But if the thing or truth do not fall in with our affections it cannot please us; if it be aside from our present state of feeling, and we refuse to change the course of our feelings, we shall either view it with indifference, our affections being otherwise engaged, or if it press upon us we shall turn from and resist it. If it be not only aside from the subject that now engages our affections, but opposed to it, we shall and must (our affections remaining the same) resist and oppose it.

We not only feel uninterested or displeased and disgusted when a subject different from that which at present engages our affections is introduced and crowded upon us, but if any thing even upon the same subject that is far above or below our tone of feeling is presented, and if our affections remain the same, and we refuse to be enlisted and brought to that point, we must feel uninterested, and perhaps grieved and offended. If the subject be exhibited in a light that is below our present tone of feeling, we cannot be interested until it come up to our feelings; and if the subject in this cooling and to us degraded point of view is held up before our mind, and we struggle to maintain these high affections, we feel displeased because our affections are not fed but opposed. If the subject be presented in a manner that strikes far above our tone of feeling, and our affections grovel and refuse to arise, it does not fall in with and feed our affections, therefore we cannot be interested; it is enthusiasm to us; we are displeased with the warmth in which we do not choose to participate, and the farther it is above our temperature the more we are disgusted.

These are truths to which the experience of every man will testify, as they hold good upon every subject, and under all circumstances; and are founded upon principles incorporated with the very nature of man. Present to the ardent politician his favorite subject in his favorite light, and when it has engaged his affections touch it with the fire of eloquence, cause it to burn and blaze before his mind, and you delight him greatly. But change your style and tone---let down your fire and feeling---turn the subject over---present it in a drier light---he at once loses nearly all his interest, and becomes uneasy at the descent. Now change the subject---introduce death and solemn judgment---he is shocked and stunned; press him with them, he is disgusted and offended.

Now, this loss of interest in his favorite subject is the natural consequence of taking away from before the mind that burning view of it that poured fire through his affections; this disgust that he feels at the change of the subject, is the natural consequence of presenting something that was at the time directly opposed to the state of his feelings. Unless he chooses to turn his mind as you change the subject he cannot but be displeased.

A refined musician is listening almost in rapture to the skilful execution of a fine piece of harmony---throw in discords upon him; he is in pain in a moment. Increase and prolong the dissonance, and he leaves the room in disgust. You are fond of music; but you are at present

melancholy---you are in great affliction---you are inclined to weep---the plaintive tones of an Eolian harp softly upon your ear, and melt around the heart---your tears flow fast---but now the din of trumpets, drums, and cymbals, and the piercing fife in mirthful quicksteps breaks upon your ear, and drowns the soft breathings of the harp---you feel distressed---you turn away and stop your ears. The plaintive harp touched you in a tender point, it fell in with your feelings; therefore you were gratified. The martial music opposed your state of feeling, you were too melancholy to have your affections elevated and enlivened by it; it therefore necessarily distressed you.

Your heart is glowing with religious feelings---you are not only averse to the introduction of any other subject at this time, but are uninterested with any thing upon the same subject that is far below the tone of your affections. Suppose you hear a cold man preach or pray; while he remains cold and you are warm with feeling you are not interested, for your affections are not fed and cherished unless he comes up to your tone; if this foes not happen you are distressed and perhaps disgusted with his coldness. This is a thing of course. Suppose, like Paul, "you have great heaviness and continual sorrow in your heart" for dying sinners; that "the Spirit helpeth your infirmities, making intercessions for you, according to the will of God, with groanings that cannot be uttered; "in this state of mind you hear a person pray who does not mention sinners---you hear a minister preach who says but little to them, and that in a heartless, unmeaning manner; you are not interested, you cannot be, feeling as you do, but you are grieved and distressed. Suppose you are lukewarm, and carnal, and earthly in your affections; you hear one exhort, or pray, or preach, who is highly spiritual, and fervent, and affectionate; if you cling to your sins, and your affections will not rise; if through prejudice, or pride, or the earthly and sensual state of your affections, you refuse to kindle and to grasp the subject, although you admit every word he says, yet you are not pleased. He is above your temperature, you are annoyed with the manner, and fire, and spirit of the man. The higher he rises, if your affections grovel, the farther apart you are, and the more you are displeased. While your heart is wrong the nearer right he is, the more he burns upon you; if your heart will not enkindle, the more you are disgusted.

Now, in both these cases, they, whose affections stand at or near the same point with him who speaks or prays, will not feel disturbed but pleased. Those that are lukewarm will listen to the dull man, and say, "'Tis pretty well." Their pleasure will be small, because their affections are low; but upon the whole they are pleased. Those who have no affections at the time will of course not feel at all. All who have much feeling will listen with grief and pain. These would listen to the ardent man with great interest. Let him glow and blaze and they are in a repture. But the carnal and cold-hearted, while they refuse to rise, are necessarily disturbed and offended with his fire.

From these remarks we may learn,

- First, why persons differing in theory upon doctrinal points in religion, and belonging to different denomination, will often, for a time, walk together in great harmony and affection. It is because they feel deeply, and feel alike. Their differences are in a great measure lost or forgotten while they fall in with each other's state of feeling; they will walk together while in heart they are agreed.

- Again---We see why young converts love to associate with each other, and with those other older saints who have most religious feeling; these walk together because they feel alike.

- Again---We see why lukewarm professors and impenitent sinners have the same

difficulties with means in revivals of religion. We often hear them complain of the manner of preaching and praying. Their objections are the same, they find fault with the same things, and use the same arguments in support of their objections. The reason is, that at that time their affections are nearly the same; it is the fire and the spirit that disturbs their frosty hearts. For the time being they walk together, for in feeling they are agreed.

- Again---We see why ministers and Christians visiting revivals, often, at first, raise objections to the means used, and cavil, and sometimes takes sides with the wicked. The fact is, coming, as they often do, from regions where there are no religious revivals at the time, they frequently feel reproved and annoyed by the warmth and spirit which they witness. The praying, preaching, and conservation, are above their present temperature. Sometimes, prejudice on account of its being amongst a different denomination from them, or prejudice against the preacher or people, or perhaps pride or envy or worldliness, or something of the kind, chains down their affections that they do not enter into the spirit of the work. Now, while their hearts remain wrong, they will, of course, cavil; and the nearer right any thing is, the more spiritual and holy, so much the more it must displease them, while their affections grovel. (We do not mean to justify anything that is wrong and unscriptural in the use of means to promote revivals of religion. Nor do we pretend that everything is right, that may, and often does, give offence. We know that many things may exist, and while human nature remains as it is, will exist in revivals, that are to be lamented, and ought, as carefully as possible, to be corrected. But we do hold it as a certain truth, that while any heart is wrong, any thing that falls in with it, and pleases it, must be wrong also, as certainly as that one false weight can be balanced only be another just as false: and while a heart in this state, the best things will be the most certain to offend. And if this heart, remaining wrong, could be brought in view of a state of things as perfect as heaven, it would blaspheme, and be filled with the torments of hell. The only remedy is to call upon him to "repent and make to him a new heart," and when he has done this, right things will please him, and not before.)

- Again---We see why ministers and private Christians differ about prudential measures. The man who sees and feels the infinitely solemn things of eternity, will necessarily judge very differently of what is prudent or imprudent, in the use of means, from one whose spiritual eye is almost closed. The man whose heart is breaking for perishing sinners, will, of course, deem it prudent, and right, and necessary, to "use great plainness of speech," and to deal with them in a very earnest and affectionate manner. He would deem a contrary course highly imprudent, and dangerous, and criminal. While he who feels but little for them, and sees but little of their danger, will satisfy himself with using very different means, or using them in a very different manner, and will, of course, entertain very different notions of what is prudent. Hence we see the same person having very different notions of prudence, and consequently practising very differently, at different times. Indeed, a man's notions of what is prudent as to means and measures in revivals of religion, will depend, and, in a great measure, ought to depend, on the state of his own affections, and the state of feeling with which he is surrounded. For, what would be prudent under some circumstances, would be highly imprudent in others. What would be prudent for a man in a certain state of his affections, and under certain circumstances, would be the height of imprudence, in the same person, in a different state of feeling, and under other circumstances. It is, in most cases, extremely difficult to form, and often very wrong publicly to express, an opinion condemning a measure as imprudent, (which is not condemned by the word of

God,) without being in a situation to enter into the feelings and circumstances of the individual and people at the time the measure was adopted. If Christians and ministers would keep these things in mind, a great many uncharitable and censorious speeches would be avoided, and much injury to the cause of truth and righteousness would be prevented.

- Again---We see why lukewarm Christians and sinners are not disturbed by dull preaching or praying. It does not take hold on their feelings at all, and therefore does not distress nor offend them. Hence we see that if, in a revival of religion, when cold and wicked hearts are disturbed with plain and pungent dealing, a dull minister is called upon, and preaches to the people, the wicked and cold-hearted will praise his preaching. This shows why, in seasons of revival, we often hear sinners and lukewarm Christians wish that their minister would preach as he used to; that he would be himself again. The reason of this is plain; he did not use to move them, but now his fire, and spirit, and pungency annoy them, and disturb their carnal slumbers.

- Again---We may here learn how to estimate the opinions of ministers and Christians, and our own opinions, when our affections are in a bad state. How does such a man approve of what was said or done? What is his opinion as to means and measures?&c. are questions often asked, and answered, and the answer depended upon as high authority, without any regard to the state of that man's affections at the time. Now, in most cases, we do utterly wrong to place much confidence in our own opinions, or in the opinions of others, as to prudential measures, unless we have evidence of the right state of our or their affections; for it is almost certain, that should our affections alter, we should view things in a different light, and consequently change our opinion. Christians would do well to remember and adopt the resolution of President Edwards, "that he would always act as he saw to be most proper when he had the clearest views of the things of religion."

- Again---We learn why churches are sometimes convulsed by revivals of religion. In most churches there are probably more or less hypocrites, who, when revivals are in a measure stripped of animal feeling, and become highly spiritual, are disturbed by the fire and spirit of them, and inwardly and sometimes openly oppose them. But when a part only of the real Christians in a church awake from their slumbers and become very spiritual and heavenly, and the rest remain carnal and earthly in their affections, the church is in danger of being torn in sunder. For as those who are awake become more engaged, more spiritual and active, the others, if they will not awake, will be jealous and offended, and feeling rebuked by the engagedness of others, will cavil, and find themselves the more displeased, as those that are more spiritual rise farther above them. The nearer to a right state of feeling the engaged ones arrive, the farther apart they are; and as they ascend on the scale of holy feeling, if others will not ascend with them, the almost certain consequence will be that these will descend, until they really have no community of feeling, and can no longer walk together, because they are not agreed. This state of feeling in a church, calls for great searchings of heart in all its members, and although greatly to be dreaded and deeply to be lamented, when it exists, is easily accounted for, upon these plain principles of our nature, and is what sometimes will happen, in spite of the sagacity or angels to prevent it.

- Again---We see why ministers are sometimes unsettled by revivals. It will sometimes happen, without any imprudence on the part of the minister, that many of his church and congregation will not enter into the spirit of a revival. If his own affections get

enkindled, and he feels very much for his flock and for the honor of his master, he will most assuredly press them with truth, and annoy them by his spirit, and pungency, and fire, until he offends them. If they feel wrong, the more powerfully and irresistibly he forces truth upon them, so much the more, of course, unless their feelings alter, he will offend them, and in the end, perhaps, find it expedient to leave them. All this may happen, and be as right and necessary in a minister as it was for Paul to leave places and people, when divers were hardened, and contradicted, and blasphemed, and spoke evil of this way before the multitude.

Another case may occur, where the church and people may awake while the shepherd sleeps and will not awake. This will inevitably alienate their affections from him, and destroy their confidence in him. In either of these cases, they may find themselves unable to walk together, because they are not agreed. In the former case, let the minister obey the command of Christ, and "shake off the dust of his feet, for a testimony against them." In the latter, let the church shake off their sleepy minister; they are better without him than with him. "Wo to the shepherds that do not feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye feed not the flock. Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock, neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them." Ezek. 34:2,3,9,10.

President Edwards says---

"Though ministers preach never so good doctrine, and be never so painful and laborious in their work, yet if they show to their people that they are not well affected to this work, but are doubtful and suspicious of it, they will be very likely to do their people a great deal more hurt than good. For the very frame of such a great and extraordinary work of God, if their people were suffered to believe it to be his work, and the example of other towns, together with what preaching they might hear occasionally, would be likely to have a much greater influence upon the minds of their people to awaken and animate them in religion, than all other labors with them. Besides, their minister's opinion will not only beget in them a suspicion of the work they hear of abroad, whereby the mighty hand of God that appears in it, loses its influence upon their minds; but it will also tend to create a suspicion of every thing of the like that shall appear among themselves, as being something of the same distemper that is become so epidemical in the land. And what is this, in effect, but to create a suspicion of all vital religion, and to put the people upon talking against and discouraging it, wherever it appears, and knocking it on the head as fast as it rises. We, who are ministers, by looking on this work from year to year with a displeased countenance, shall effectually keep the sheep from their pasture, instead of doing the part of the shepherds by feeding them; and our people had a great deal better be without any settled minister at all, at such a day as this.

"We who are in this sacred office had need to take heed what we do, and

how we behave ourselves at this time; a less thing in a minister will hinder the work of God, than in others. If we are very silent, or say but little about the work, in our public prayers and preaching, or seem carefully to avoid speaking of it in our conservation, it will be interpreted by our people, that we who are their guides, to whom they are to have their eye for spiritual instruction, are suspicious of it; and this will tend to raise the same suspicions in them; and so the aforementioned consequences will follow. And if we really hinder and stand in the way of the work of God, whose business above all others it is to promote it, how can we expect to partake of the glorious benefits of it? And, by keeping others from the benefit, we shall keep them out of heaven; therefore those awful words of Christ to the Jewish teachers, should be considered by us, Matthew 23:13. "Wo unto you, for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." If we keep the sheep from their pasture, how shall we answer it to the great Shepherd, who has bought the flock with his precious blood, and has committed the care of them to us? I would humbly desire of every minister that has thus long remained disaffected to this work, and has had contemptible thoughts of it, to consider whether he has not hitherto been like Michael, without any child, or at least in a great measure barren and unsuccessful in his work: I pray God it may not be a perpetual barrenness, as hers was."

- Again---We may see that carnal professors and sinners have no difficulty with animal feeling. It is not uncommon in revivals of religion to hear a great deal of opposition made to what they term animal feeling. That much of this kind of feeling is sometimes excited in revivals of religion is not denied, nor is it strange, nay, it is impossible that real religious affections should be excited to any considerable degree, without exciting the animal sympathies and sensibilities; and to wonder at this, or to object to a revival on this account, is palpably absurd. But, in most cases, it is not the animal feeling that can give offence, for so far as these feelings are concerned, there is a perfect community of feeling between saints and sinners, and carnal and spiritual Christians. Sinners have as much animal feeling as saints: cold professors have as much of the animal as warm and spiritual Christians. So far, then, as animal feeling goes, they can all sympathize, and indeed we often see that they do. Adopt a strain of exhortation or preaching that is calculated to awaken mere sympathy and animal feeling, and you will soon see that there is a perfect community of feeling amongst cold and warm hearted Christians and sinners; they will all weep and seem to melt, and no one will be offended, and I may add, no one will be convicted or converted. But change your style, and become more spiritual and holy in your matter, and throw yourself out in the ardent and powerful manner, in direct appeal to the conscience and the heart---their tears will soon be dried, the carnal and cold hearted will become uneasy, and soon find themselves offended. So far as animal feeling goes, they walk together, for in this they are agreed; but as soon as feeling becomes spiritual and holy, they can go together no farther; for here they are not, (and while sinners remain impenitent, and cold hearts remain cold,) they cannot be, agreed.

- Again---We may see why impenitent sinners cannot like pure revivals of religion. It is because God is in them. They hate God, and this is the reason why God commands them to make to themselves a new heart. This is the reason, and the only reason, why sinners need a new heart. Now, while they are under the influence of "a carnal mind, which is enmity against God," they do, and must, self-evidently, hate everything like

God, precisely in proportion as they see it to bear his image. Hence we see, that the more a revival is stripped of animal feeling and of everything wrong, the more it will necessarily offend wrong hearts. The more of God, and the less of human imperfection, there is to be seen in them, the more they will and must excite the enmity of carnal hearts.

- Again---We learn how to estimate apparent revivals where there is no opposition from the wicked. If persons under the dominion of a carnal mind do not oppose, it must be owing to one of three causes. 1st. Either they are so convicted that they dare not openly oppose; (and even then they are opposed in heart;) or, 2dly, there is nothing of the Holy Spirit in them; or 3dly, which often happens, from an injudicious application of means to the sympathies of the multitude, the operations of the Holy Spirit are kept out of the sinner's view and covered up in the rubbish of animal feeling. Any thing that keeps out of the sinner's view the work of the Holy Spirit, tends to prevent opposition. And every thing that exposes to the sinner's view the hand of God, will certainly excite the opposition of his unregenerate heart. That excitement, therefore, which does not call out the opposition of the wicked and wrong hearted, is either not a revival of religion at all, or it is so conducted that sinners do not see the finger of God in it.

Hence we see, that the more pure and holy the means are that are used to promote a revival of religion, the more they are stripped of human infirmity and sympathy, and the more like God they are, so much the more, of necessity, will they excite the opposition of all wrong hearts. For, while a man's heart is wrong upon any subject, it is self-evident that he cannot heartily approve of what is right upon that subject; for this would involve a contradiction. It would be the same as to say that he could feel both right and wrong upon the same subject at the same time.

Hence it appears, that other things being equal, those means, and that preaching, both as to matter and manner, which call forth most of the native enmity of the heart, and that are most directly over against wrong hearts, are nearest right (Let it not be thought that we advocate or recommend preaching, or using other means, with design to give offense. Nor that we suppose that the gospel cannot be preached, and that means cannot be used in a wrong spirit, and in a manner that is highly objectionable, and may justly give offence. All such things are to be condemned. But still we do insist that holy things are offensive to unholy hearts, and while hearts remain unholy, they cannot be pleased but with that which is unholy like themselves. The understanding my approve, the conscience may approve, but the heart will not, and, remaining unholy, cannot approve of that which is holy. If, therefore, a sinner who is under the dominion of a "carnal mind," which is "enmity against God," is pleased with preaching, it must be either because the character of God is not faithfully exhibited, or the sinner is prevented from apprehending it, in its true light, by inattention, or by being so taken up with the style and manner as to overlook the offensiveness of the matter. If, therefore, the matter of preaching is right, and the sinner is pleased, there is something defective in the manner; either a want of earnestness, or holy unction, or something else, prevents the sinner from seeing, what preaching ought to show him,

that he hates God and his truth).

Hence, we see the folly of those who are laboring to please persons whose affections are in a wrong state upon religious subjects. They cannot be pleased with any thing right and holy while their hearts are in this wrong state, for this we have just seen would involve a contradiction.

This shows why so much wrong feeling stirred up in revivals of religion.

It is the natural effect of pure revivals to stir up wrong feeling in wrong hearts. Revivals of religion on earth, stir up wrong feeling in hell; they will disturb the same spirit, and stir up the same feelings, whenever they come in contact with rebellious hearts, whether in the church or out of it. Whenever the Holy Spirit comes, or is seen to operate, the opposite spirit is disturbed of course. A great degree of right and holy feeling among saints, will naturally stir up a great degree of unholy and wicked feeling in all those hearts that are determinately wrong. The more right and holy feeling there is, the more wrong and unholy feeling there will be, of course, unless sinners and carnal professors bow and submit. They cannot walk together, because they are not agreed: and the more holy and heavenly the saints become in their affections and conduct, the farther apart they will be, until the light of eternity will set them, in feeling and affections, as far asunder as heaven and hell.

This shows that the difference between heaven and hell, as it regards moral character, and happiness and misery, consists in the different state of the hearts or affections of their respective inhabitants.

This demonstrates, beyond all contradiction, that sinners cannot be saved unless they are born again. In other words, it is plainly impossible, in the nature of things, that sinners should walk and be happy with saints and holy angels, without an entire change in their affections. Sinners cannot walk with the saint here. As soon as the saints cease to walk "after the course of this world," sinners think it strange that they run not with them to the same excess of riot, "speaking evil of them." As soon as Christians awake and become spiritual and active, holy and heavenly, and break off from their vain and wicked associations with the world, sinners are uniformly distressed and offended. They try to imagine that it is something wrong in the saints, and in revivals, that offends them. But the truth is, it is the little that is right in the saints, and that in which there is the most of God in revivals, that offends them most. And were the saints as holy as angels are, or as holy as they will be in heaven, sinners must of course be so much the farther from having any community of feeling with them: and as saints rise in holiness, and sinners sink in sin, they will go farther and farther apart for ever and ever.

- I remark, lastly, that this shows why the lives and preaching of the prophets, of Christ and his apostles, and the revivals of the early ages of the church, met with so much more violent opposition from carnal professors of religion, and from ungodly sinners, than is offered to preachers and revival in these days.

It is not to be denied, that the saints in those days "had trials of cruel mocking and scourging, yea, of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy;) they wandered in deserts, in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

It is not and cannot be denied, that the preaching of the prophets, of Christ and his apostles, and of primitive ministers, was opposed with great bitterness by many professed saints, and by multitudes of ungodly sinners, more than that of any preachers of the present day. Nor is it to be concealed, that professors of religion were often leaders in this opposition; that they stirred up the Romans to crucify Jesus, and afterwards to persecute and destroy his saints, and crucify his apostles. That even the religious leaders, and learned doctors of the law, endeavored to prejudice the multitude against the Savior, and to prevent their listening to his discourses: "He hath a devil and is mad," said they, "why hear ye him?" They led the way in opposing the apostles in the revivals in which they were engaged. We must admit too, that those revivals made a great deal of noise in the world, insomuch that the apostles were accused of "turning the world upside down:" and that sinners were often greatly hardened by the preaching of Christ and his apostles; "were filled with great wrath," and opposed with such bitterness, that Christ told his apostles to "let them alone." In some places where the apostles preached, "divers were" so "hardened," that they "contradicted and blasphemed, and spake evil of this way," insomuch that the apostles were forced to leave, and go to other places, and sometimes to leave under very humiliating circumstances, but just escaping with their lives. Now these are facts that we need not blush to meet; as they are easily accounted for, upon the principle contained in the text, and illustrated in this discourse. All these things afford no evidence that the prophets, and Christ and his apostles, were imprudent and unholy men; that their preaching was too overbearing and severe; or that there was something wrong in the management of revivals in those day. The fact is, that the prophets were so much more holy in their lives, and so much bolder, and more faithful in delivering their messages; that Christ was so much more searching, and plain, and pungent, and personal in his preaching, and so entirely "separate from sinners" in his life; the apostles were so pungent and plain in their dealing with sinners and professed saints, and so self-denying and holy in their lives, that carnal professors and ungodly sinners could not walk with them. The means that were then used to promote revivals were more holy and free from alloy than they now are. There was less of mere sympathy, and of that hypocritical suavity of manner, and of those embellishments of language, that are calculated and designed to court the applause of the ungodly. "Renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully," they preached, "not with the enticing words of man's wisdom," but "with great plainness of speech," so that the ungodly, in the church and out of it, were filled with wrath.

Stephen was so holy and searching in his address, that the elders of Israel

"gnashed upon him with their teeth." But this is no evidence that he was imprudent. The fact, that the revivals of the present day so much more silent and gradual in their progress, than they were on the day of Pentecost, and at many other times and places, and create much less noise and opposition among cold professors and ungodly sinners, does not prove that the theory of revivals is better understood now than it was then, nor that those ministers and Christians who are engaged in these revivals are more prudent than the apostles and primitive Christians; and to support this, would evince great spiritual pride in us. Nor are we to say that the human heart is changed, or that the character of God is become less offensive "to the carnal mind." No! the fact is, the prophets, and Christ, and his apostles, and the primitive saints, were more holy, more bold and active, more plain and pungent in their preaching, less conformed to this crazy world; in one word, they were more prudent and more like heaven than we are; these are the reasons why they were more hated than we are, why their preaching and praying gave so much more offence than ours. Revivals, in their days, were more free from carnal policy, and that management that tends to keep out of the sinner's views the naked hand of God: these are the reasons why they made so much noise than the revivals that we witness in these days, and stirred up so much of earth and hell to oppose them, that they convulsed and turned the world upside down. It was known then, that "men could not serve God and mammon." It was seen to be true, that "if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he shall suffer persecution." It was understood then, that if "ministers pleased men, they were not the servants of Christ." The church and world could not walk together, for then they were not agreed. Let us not be puffed up, and imagine that we are prudent and wise, and have learned how to manage carnal professors and sinners, whose "carnal mind is enmity against God," so as not to call forth their opposition to truth and holiness, as Christ and his apostles did. But let us know that if they have less difficulty with us, and with our lives, and preaching, than they had with theirs, it is because we are less holy, less heavenly, less like God than they were. If we walk with the lukewarm and ungodly, or they with us, it is because we are agreed. For two cannot walk together except they be agreed.

SERMON IX.

STEWARDSHIP.

-- Luke xvi. 2.--
"Give an account of thy stewardship."

This lecture was done by Dara Kachel.

A steward is one who is employed to transact the business of another, as his agent or representative in the business in which he is employed.

His duty is, to promote, in the best possible manner, the interest of his employer. He is liable at any time to be called to an account for the manner in which he has transacted his business, and to be removed from his office at the pleasure of his employer.

One important design of the parable, of which the text is a part, is to teach that all men are God's stewards. The Bible declares, that the silver and the gold are his, and that he is, in the highest possible sense, the proprietor of the universe. Men are mere stewards, employed by him for the transaction of his business, and required to do all they do for his glory. Even their eating and drinking are to be done for his glory, i.e. that they may be strengthened for the best performance of his business.

That men are God's stewards, is evident, from the fact that God treats them as such, and removes them at his pleasure, and disposes of the property in their hands, which he could not do did he not consider them merely his agents, and not the owners of the property.

- 1. If men are God's stewards, they are bound to account to him for their time. God has created them, and keeps them alive, and their time is his. Reader, should you employ a steward, and pay him for his time, would you not expect him to employ that time in your service? Would you not consider it fraud and dishonesty, for him, while in your pay, to spend his time in idleness, or in promoting his private interests? Suppose he were often idle, that would be bad enough; but suppose that he wholly neglected your business, and that when called to an account and censured for not doing his duty, he should say, "Why, what have I done?" would you not suppose that for him to have done nothing, and let your business suffer, was great wickedness, for which he deserved to be punished?

  Now, reader, you are God's steward, and if you are an impenitent sinner, you have wholly neglected God's business, and have remained idle in his vineyard, or have been only attending to your own private interests; and now are you ready to ask what you have done? Are you not a knave, thus to neglect the business of your great employer, and go about your own private business, to the neglect of all that justice, and duty, and God require of you?

  But suppose your steward should employ his time in opposing your interest, using your capital and time in driving at speculations directly opposed to the business for which he was employed? Would you not consider this great dishonesty? Would you not think it very ridiculous for him to account himself an honest man? Would you not suppose yourself obliged to call him to an account? And would you not account anyone a villain who should approve such conduct? Would you not think yourself bound to publish him abroad, that the world might know his character, and that you might clear yourself from the charge of upholding such a person?

  How, then, shall God dispose of you, if you employ your time in opposing his interest, and use his capital in your hands to drive at speculations directly opposed to the business for which he has employed you? Are you not ashamed, then, to account yourself an honest man; and will not God consider himself under an obligation to call you to an account? Should he not do this, would not the omission be an evidence, on his part, of his

approval of your abominable wickedness! Must he not feel himself constrained to make you a public example, that the universe may know how much he abhors your crimes!

- 2. Stewards are bound to give an account of their talents. By talents, I mean here, the powers of their minds. Suppose you should educate a man to be your steward, should support him during the time he was engaged in study, and be at all the expense of his education, and that then he should either neglect to employ his mind in your service, or should use the powers of his cultivated intellect for the promotion of his own interests; would you not consider this as fraud and villany? Now, God created your minds, and has been at the expense of your education, and has trained you up for his service; and do you either let your mind remain in idleness, or pervert the powers of your cultivated intellect, to the promotion of your own private interest, and then ask what you have done to deserve the wrath of God?

  But suppose your steward should use his education in opposition to your interest, and use all the powers of his mind to destroy the very interest for which he was educated, and which he is employed to sustain; would you not look upon his conduct as marked with horrid guilt? And do you, sinner, employ the powers of your mind, and whatever education God may have given you, in opposing his interest--perverting his truth--scattering "fire-brands, arrows, and death" all around you, and think to escape his curse? Shall not the Almighty be avenged upon such a wretch?

- 3. A steward is bound to give an account for the influence he exerts upon mankind around him.

  Suppose you should employ a steward, should educate him until he possessed great talents, should put a large capital into his hands, should exalt him him high in society, and place him in circumstances to exert an immense influence in the commercial community, and that then he should refuse or neglect to exert this influence in promoting your interest; would you not consider this default a perpetual fraud practised upon you?

  But suppose he should exert all this influence against you, and array himself with all his weight of character, and talent, and influence, and even employ the capital with which he was intrusted, in opposing your interest--what language, in your estimation, could then express your sense of his guilt?

  Reader, whatever influence God has given you, if you are an impenitent sinner, you are not only neglecting to use it for God, to build up his kingdom, but you are employing it in opposition to his interest and glory; and for this do you not deserve the damnation of hell? Perhaps you are rich, or learned, or have, on other accounts, great influence in society, and are refusing to use it to save the souls of men, but are bringing all your weight of character, and talents, and influence, and example, to drag all who are within the sphere of your influence down to the gates of hell.

- 4. You must give an account for the manner in which you use the property in your possession. Suppose your steward should refuse to employ the capital with which you intrusted him for the promotion of your interest, or suppose he were to account it his

own, and to use it for his own private interest, or apply it to the gratification of his lusts, or the aggrandizement of his family; in bestowing large portions upon his daughters, or in ministering to the lusts and pride of his sons; while at the same time your business was suffering for the want of this very capital; or suppose that this steward held the purse-strings of your wealth, and that you had multitudes of other servants, whose necessities were to be supplied out of the means in his hands, and that their welfare, and even their lives, depended on these supplies; and yet this steward should minister to his own lusts, and those of his family, and suffer those, your other servants, to perish--what would you think of such wickedness? You intrusted him with your money, and enjoined him to take care of your other servants, and through his neglect they were all dead men.

Now, you have God's money in your hands, and are surrounded by God's children, whom he commands you to love as you do yourself. God might, with perfect justice, have given his property to them instead of you. The world is full of poverty, desolation, and death; hundreds and millions are perishing, body and soul; God calls on you to exert yourself as his steward, for their salvation, to use all the property in your possession, so as to promote the greatest possible amount of happiness among your fellow-creatures. The Macedonian cry comes from the four winds of heaven, "Come over and help us;" come over and help us; and yet you refuse to help; you hoard up the wealth in your possession, live in luxury, and let your fellow-men go to hell. What language can describe your guilt?

But suppose your servant, when you called him to account, should say, "Have I not acquired this property by my own industry?" would you not answer, "You have employed my capital to do it, and my time, for which I have paid you; and the money you have gained is mine." So when God calls upon you to use the property in your possession for him, do you say it is yours, that you have obtained it by your own industry? Pray, whose time have you used, and whose talents and means? Did not God create you? Has He not sustained you? Has He not prospered you, and given you all his success? Yes, your time is his, your all is his, you have no right to say the wealth you have is yours; it is His, and you are bound to use it for His glory. You are a traitor to your trust if you do not so employ it.

If your clerk take only a little of your money, his character is gone, and he is branded as a villain. But sinners take not only a dollar or so, but all they can get, and use it for themselves. Don't you see that God would do wrong not to call you to account, and punish you for filling both your pockets with His money, and calling it your own. Professor of religion, if you are doing so don't call yourself Christian.

- 5. You must give an account for your soul. You have no right to go to hell. God has a right to your soul; your going to hell would injure the whole universe. It would injure hell, because it would increase its torments. It would injure heaven, because it would wrong it out of your services. Who shall take the harp in your place, in singing praises to God? Who shall contribute your share to the happiness of heaven?

Suppose you had a steward to whom you had given life, and educated him at great expense, and then he should wilfully throw that life away; has he a

right thus to dispose of a life of so much value to you? Is it not as unjust as to rob you of the same amount of property in any thing else? God has made your soul, sustained and educated you, till you are now able to render him important service, and to glorify him for ever; and have you a right to go to hell, and throw away your soul, and thus rob God of your service? Have you a right to render hell more miserable, and heaven less happy, and thus injure God and all the universe?

Do you still say, What if I do lose my soul, it is nobody's business but my own? That is false: it is every body's business. Just as well might a man bring a contagious disease into a city, and spread dismay and death all around, and say it was nobody's business but his own.

- 6. You must give an account for the souls of others. God commands you to be a co-worker with him in converting the world. He needs your services, for he saves souls only through the agency of men. If souls are lost, or the gospel is not spread over the world, sinners charge all the blame upon Christians, as if they only were bound to be active in the cause of Christ, to exercise benevolence, to pray for a lost world, to pull sinners out of the fire. I wonder who has absolved you from these duties? Instead of doing your duty, you lie as a stumbling-block in the way of other sinners. Thus, instead of helping to save a world, all your actions help to send souls to hell.

- 7. You are bound to give an account of the sentiments you entertain and propagate. God's kingdom is to be built up by truth, and not by error. Your sentiments will have an important bearing upon the influence you exert over those around you.

Suppose the business in which your steward was employed, required that he should entertain right notions concerning the manner of doing it, and the principles involved in it; of your will and of his duty. And suppose you had given him, in writing, a set of rules for the government of his conduct, in relation to all the affairs with which he was intrusted; then if he should neglect to examine those rules, or should pervert their plain meaning, and should thus pervert his own conduct, and be instrumental in deceiving others, and leading them in the way of disobedience, would you not look upon this as criminal and deserving the severest reprobation?

God has given you rules for the government of your conduct. In the Bible you have a plain revelation of his will in relation to all your actions. And now, do you either neglect or pervert it, and thus go astray yourself, and lead others with you in the way of disobedience and death, and then call yourself an honest man? For shame!

- 8. You must give an account of your opportunities of doing good.

If you employ a steward to transact your business, you expect him to take advantage of the state of the market and of things in general, to improve every opportunity to promote your interest. Suppose at the busy seasons of the year, he should spend his time in idleness, or in his own private affairs, and not have an eye at all to the most favorable opportunities of promoting your interest, would you not soon say to him, "Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward?" Now, sinner, you have always neglected opportunities of serving God, of warning your

fellow-sinners, of promoting revivals of religion, and advancing the interest of truth. You have been diligent merely to promote your own private interests, and have entirely neglected the interests of your great employer; and are you not a wretch, and do you not deserve to be put out of the stewardship, as a dishonest man, and to be sent to the state prison of the universe? How can you escape the damnation of hell?

REMARKS.

1. From this subject you can see why the business of this world is a snare that drowns men's souls in destruction and perdition.

Sinners transact business to promote their own private interests, and not as God's stewards; and thus act dishonestly, defraud God, grieve the Spirit, and promote their own sensuality, pride, and death. If men considered themselves as God's clerks, they would not lie, and overreach, and work on the Sabbath, to make money for Him; they would be sure that such conduct would not please him. God never created this world to be a snare to men--it is abused; he designed it to be a delightful abode for them--but how perverted!

Should all men's business be done as for God, they would not find it such a temptation to fraud and dishonesty, as to ensnare and ruin their souls; it would have no tendency to wean the soul from Him, or to banish Him from their thoughts. When holy Adam dressed God's garden and kept it, had that a tendency to banish God from his mind? If your gardener should all day be very busy In your presence, dressing your plants, consulting your views, and doing your pleasure continually, asking how shall this be done, and how shall that be done, would this have a tendency to banish you from his thoughts? So, if you were busy all the day, seeking God's glory, and transacting all your business for him, acting as his steward, sensible that his eye was upon you, and were this your constant inquiry, how will this please him? and how will that please him? your being busy in such employment would have no tendency to distract your mind, and turn your thoughts from God.

Or, suppose a mother, whose son was in a distant land, was busy all day in putting up clothes, and books, and necessaries for him, continually questioning, how will this please him? and how will that please him? would that employment have a tendency to divert her mind from her absent son? Now if you consider yourself as God's steward, doing his business; if you are in all things consulting his interests and his glory, and consider all your possessions as his, your time and your talents; the more busily you are engaged in his service, the more will God be present to all your thoughts.

Again. You see why idleness is a snare to the soul. A man that is idle, is dishonest; forgets his responsibility, refuses to serve God, and gives himself up to the temptations of the devil. Nay, the idle man tempts the devil to tempt him.

Again. You see the error of the maxim, that men cannot attend to business and religion at the same time. A man's business ought to be a part of his religion. He cannot be religious in idleness. He must have some business, to be religious at all; and if it is performed from a right motive, his lawful and necessary business is as much a necessary part of religion as prayer, or going to church, or reading his Bible. Any one who pleads this maxim is a knave by his own confession; for no man can believe that an honest employment, and pursued for God's glory, is inconsistent with religion. The objection supposes in the face of it, that he

considers his business either as unlawful in itself, or that he pursues it in a dishonest manner. If this be true he cannot be religious, while thus pursuing his business: if his employment be wicked, he must relinquish it; or if honest and pursued in an unlawful manner, he must pursue it lawfully; or in either case he will lose his soul. But if his business is lawful, let him pursue it honestly, and from right motives, and he will find no difficulty in attending to his business, and being religious at the same time. A life of business is best for Christians, as it exercises their graces and makes them strong.

4. That most men do not account themselves as God's stewards, is evident from the fact that they consider the losses they sustain in business as their own losses. Suppose that some of your debtors should fail, and your clerks should speak of it as their loss, and say they had met with great losses, would you not look upon it as ridiculous in the extreme? And is it not quite as ridiculous for you, if any of your Lord's debtors fail, to make yourself very uneasy and unhappy about it? Is it your loss, or his? If you have done your duty, and taken suitable care of his property, and a loss is sustained, it is nor your loss, but his. You should look at your sins and your duty, and not be frightened lest God should become bankrupt. If you acted as God's steward or as his clerk, you would not think of speaking of the loss as your own loss. But if you have considered the property in your possession as your own, no wonder that God has taken it out of your hands

Again. You see that in the popular acceptation of the term, it is ridiculous to call institutions for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world, charitable institutions. In one sense, indeed, they may be called such. Should you give your steward orders to appropriate a certain amount of funds for the benefit of the poor in a certain parish--this would be charity in you, but not in him; it would be ridiculous in him to pretend that the charity was his. --So, institutions for the promotion of religion, are the charities of God, and not of man. The funds are God's and it is his requirement, that they be expended according to his directions, to relieve the misery, or advance the happiness of our fellow-men. God, then, is the giver, and not men; and to consider the charities as the gift of men, is to maintain that the funds belong to men, and not to God. To call them charitable institutions, in the sense in which they are usually spoken of, is to say, that men confer a favour upon God; that they give him their money, and consider Him as an object of charity.

Suppose that a company of merchants in the city should employ a number agents to transact their business in India, with an immense capital, and suppose these agents should claim the funds as their property, and whenever a draft was made upon them, should consider it begging, and asking charity at their hands, and should call the servant by whom the order was sent a beggar; and farther, suppose they should get together, and form a charitable society to pay these drafts, of which they should become "life members," by paying each a few dollars of their employers' money into a common fund, and then hold themselves exonerated from all farther calls; so that, when an agent was sent with drafts, they might direct the treasurer of their society to let him have a little, as a matter of almsgiving. Would not this be vastly ridiculous! What then do you think of yourself, when you talk of supporting these charitable institutions, as if God, the owner of the universe, was to be considered as soliciting charity, and his servants as the agents of an infinite beggar! How wonderful it is, that God does not take such presumptuous men, and put them in hell in a moment, and then with the money in their hands execute his plans for converting the world.

Nor is it less ridiculous for them to suppose that by paying over the funds in their hands for this purpose, they confer a charity upon men: for it should all along be borne in mind; that the money is not theirs. They are God's stewards, and only pay it over to his order--in doing

this, therefore, they neither confer a charity upon the servants who are sent with the orders; nor upon those for whose benefit the money is to be expended.

Again. When the servants of the Lord come with a draft upon you, to pay over some of the money in your possession into his treasury, to defray the expenses of his government and kingdom, why do you call it your own, and say you can't spare it? What do you mean by calling the agents beggars, and saying you are sick of seeing so many beggars--disgusted with those agents of charitable institutions? Suppose your steward under such circumstances should call your agents beggars, and say he was sick of so many beggars; would you not call him to an account, and let him see that the property in his possession was yours, and not his?

Again. You see the great wickedness of men's hoarding up property so long as they live, and at death leaving a part of it to the church. What a will! To leave God half of his own property. Suppose a clerk should do so, and make a will, leaving his employer part of his own property! Yet this is called piety. Do you think that Christ will always be a beggar? And yet the church is greatly puffed up with their great charitable donations and legacies to Jesus Christ.

Again. You see the wickedness of laying up money for your children, and why money so laid up is a curse to them. Suppose your steward should lay up your money for his children, would you not consider him a knave? How then dare you take God's money and lay it up for your children, while the world is sinking down to hell? But will you say, Is it not my duty to provide for my "own household?" Yes, it is your duty suitably to provide for them, but what is a suitable provision? Give them the best education you can for the service of God. Make all necessary provision for the supply of their real wants, " till they become of sufficient age to provide for themselves"-- and then if you see then disposed to do good in serving God and their generation, give them all the advantages for doing this in your power. But to make them rich--to gratify their pride--to enable them to live in luxury or ease--or to provide that they may become rich--to give your daughters what is called a genteel education--to allow them to spend their time in dress, idleness, gossiping, and effeminacy, you have no right--it is defrauding God, ruining your own soul, and greatly endangering theirs.

Again. Impenitent sinners will be finally and eternally disgraced. Do you not account it a disgrace to a man, to be detected in fraud and every species of knavery, in transacting the business of his employer? Is not such a man deservedly thrown out of business; is he not a disgrace to himself and his family; can any body trust him? How then will you appear before an injured God, and an injured universe--a God whose laws and rights you have despised--a universe with whose interests you have been at war? How will you, in the solemn judgment, be disgraced, your name execrated, and you become the hissing and contempt of hell, for the numberless frauds and villanies you have practised upon God and upon his creatures! But perhaps you are a professor of religion: Will your profession cover up your selfishness and vile hypocrisy, while you have defrauded God, spent his money upon your lusts, and accounted those as beggars, who came with drafts upon you to pay over into his treasury? How will you hold up your head in the face of heaven? How dare you now pray; how dare you sit at the communion table; how dare you profess the religion of Jesus Christ, if you have set up a private interest, and do not consider all that you have as his, and use it all for his glory?

Again. We have here a true test of Christian character. True Christians consider themselves as God's stewards; they act for him, live for him, transact business for him, eat and drink for

his glory, live and die to please him. But sinners and hypocrites live for themselves; account their time, their talents, their influence, as their own; and dispose of them all for their own private interest, and thus drown themselves in destruction and perdition.

At the judgment, we are informed that Christ will say to those who are accepted, " Well done, good and faithful servants." Reader! could he truly say this of you, " Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things," i. e. over the things committed to your charge. He will pronounce no false judgment, put no false estimate upon things; and if he cannot say this truly, " WeIl done, good and faithful servant," you will not be accepted, but will he thrust down to hell. Now, reader, what is your character, and what has been your conduct? God will soon call you to give an account of your stewardship. Have you been faithful to God, faithful to your own soul, and the souls of others? Are you ready to have your accounts examined, your conduct scrutinized, and your life weighed in the balance of the sanctuary? Are you interested in the blood of Jesus Christ? If not, repent, repent now, of all your wickedness, and lay hold upon the hope that is set before you; for, hark! a voice cries in your ears, "Give an account of thy stewardship for thou mayest be no longer steward."

SERMON X.

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION.

-- Ephesians i. 45.--

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

This lecture was typed in by Vic Johanson.

THE subject of this discourse is the doctrine of election, and in the discussion of it, I shall pursue the following order:

I. Show what is not intended by this doctrine.

II. What is intended by it.

III. That it is a doctrine of the Bible.

IV. That it is the doctrine of reason.

V. Why they are elected.

VI. When they were elected.

VII. That it is not a partial election.

VIII. That there is no injustice in it.

IX. That it opposes no obstacle to the salvation of the non-elect.

X. That it is the best that could be done for the world.

XI. That it does not supersede the use of means for the salvation of the elect.

XII. That it is the only ground of encouragement for using means.

XIII. How it may be known who are elected.

I. I am to show what is not intended by this doctrine.

- 1. Not that a part of mankind are to be saved irrespective of their moral character. We are not to suppose that the elect will be saved, do what they may, without regard to their conduct.

- 2. Nor are we to understand by it, that the elect will be forced to heaven against their will.

- 3. Nor that there is any particular provision made in the atonement for their salvation, more than for the salvation of the non-elect.

- 4. Nor that the unconverted elect are any better than the non-elect.

- 5. Nor that the unconverted elect are any more beloved of God, than the non-elect.

- 6. Nor that the non-elect are created for damnation, and cannot be saved do what they may.

II. But, by the doctrine of election, is intended,

that a part of the human family are chosen to eternal salvation; that not only are they chosen as a whole, but as individuals; every one of whom will finally be saved.

III. This doctrine is taught in the Bible.

It is plainly taught in the text. Peter directs his first epistle "to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: grace unto you, and peace be multiplied. Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last times." In 2d Timothy i. 9.--The apostle says, "who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which were given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

I will not take up your time in multiplying passages of Scripture; scarcely any doctrine of the

Bible is more abundantly and unequivocally taught than this. Much ingenuity has been exercised in explaining these passages so as to show that they do not teach election as I have stated it. But the manner in which the attempts to explain this doctrine away have uniformly terminated, has fully demonstrated that it cannot be explained away, and that the doctrine as it lies upon the face of the Scriptures is that contained in the proposition I have stated, viz. that a part of mankind are chosen to eternal life and salvation.

IV. It is the doctrine of reason.

- This will follow, first, from the foreknowledge of God. God must have foreknown who would and who would not be saved. Dr. Adam Clark attempts to evade the inference of election from the omniscience of God. He says, that God's being omniscient is no more evidence that he actually knows all things that are knowable, than that his being omnipotent proves that he does all things that are doable. His omnipotence, he observes, is under the control of his wisdom, so that he actually does nothing but what his wisdom directs; and that his omnipotence is never exerted only in those cases where wisdom calls it to act; so he maintains, that the omniscience of God, is in like manner under the control of infinite wisdom, and that although he might know every possible thing, yet he actually does know only such things as it is wise for him to know. This argument, if it can be called an argument, hardly deserves an answer. But as it is often relied upon and brought forward as sound and conclusive reasoning, I would only ask in answer to it, How could God know whether a particular thing was best to be known, without a previous knowledge of that thing? It is plain that he must first have a perfect knowledge of it before he could know whether it was wise or unwise to know it.

  Peter asserts the foreknowledge of God, by addressing Christians as elect according to the foreknowledge of God. Paul, in the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans, says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren; moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

- Again. If God foreknew whom he would save, he must have had some design about it. He must have designed that they should be saved, or should not be, or that he would have no design about it. It is unreasonable to suppose that he could have had either of the last two; he must therefore have had the first, to wit, that they should be saved.

- Again. If any are to be saved, God must save them--now if he saves them, he either chooses to save them, or chooses not to save them, or chooses to have no choice about it. But it is impossible that he should have no choice about it. It is a contradiction to say, that he knew what would occur, and that he had no choice in relation to the matter.

- Again. The doctrine of election may be inferred from the unchangeableness of God. Suppose ourselves all gathered around the judgment seat, suppose all his saints to be gathered at his right hand, and now the final sentence is to be passed, and now God designs to take all his saints to heaven. But when did God first form this design? Has he any new light on the subject? has he changed his mind? "He is of one mind, and who can turn him?"

- Again. The doctrine of election may be inferred from the fact that with God there is no past or future time, but that all eternity is present time to him. The beginning and the end of time, all the events of time and eternity, past to us, the judgment day and eternity beyond, with all their events, are present to his mind. The name and character and eternal destiny of every creature are present to him, and that is a very unworthy view of God, which exhibits him as having no definite plan in relation to all the concerns of his vast empire; indeed it is virtually denying God, and robbing him of the essential attributes of his nature.

- Again. If God does not know the individuals that will be saved, it is impossible that he should know that any will be saved. If he has designed to save his saints as a body, he must have designed to save them as individuals, for they are made up of individuals.

V. I am to show why they are elected.

- 1. I remark that it is not because the elect are any better by nature than others. Paul says, "we are called with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which he had in Christ Jesus before the world began."

- 2. Nor because God more strongly desires the salvation of the elect, than of the non-elect.

- 3. Nor because Christ agreed to purchase a part of mankind of the father, and paid down so much suffering for so much sin, and took his choice from among them, as we should from among a flock of sheep.

- 4. Nor because he felt any particular partiality for the elect more than for the non-elect. In short it was nothing in the nature or character of men, that led him to make this distinction, and to choose some in preference to others.

- Nor are we to suppose that God acted in the selection of the elect without motives. He must have had some good and substantial reason for choosing one man in preference to another. Some speak of election in such a manner as to leave the impression on the mind, that God acted arbitrarily, and that the whole turned upon an inscrutable sovereignty the reasons for which we can in no wise understand. But certainly I have not so learned the doctrine of election. For although he has not told us why he has selected one in preference to another, yet he has told us certain things from which we may justly infer what the reasons are which led him to this selection. The Scriptures inform us that God is good, yea infinitely good, and that he doth good; and from the fact that he is infinitely good we are bound to infer that he does all the good he can.

- Moreover he asks, what more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not done. If God does not save all men, it must be because all cannot consistently be saved. That the salvation of all men would require such a change in the administration of his government as would upon the whole do more hurt than good in the universe. For if the salvation of all men would upon the whole be wise, most for the glory of God, and for the best interests of his kingdom, we may rest assured that all men would be saved. But it is a matter of fact, that the conversion of all men would require a very different arrangement and administration of the divine government from that which we now experience, in order to bring sufficient moral influence to bear upon this world, to turn all men to God. It is easy to see also, that this change in the administration of the divine government might in many ways so disarrange the concerns of the universe, of

the worlds that roll around his throne, as upon the whole to do more hurt than good. It also follows, that if any part of mankind are saved, it is because God can wisely save them. That in the best possible administration of his government he can bring sufficient moral influence to bear upon them to convert them. It is a contradiction to say that the same amount of moral influence can be brought to bear upon every individual of the human family. It would be the same as to say, that every individual could be in circumstances in all respects, precisely similar. But this is a natural impossibility. The elect then must be those whom God foresaw could be converted under the wisest administration of his government. That administering it in a way that would be most beneficial to all worlds, exerting such an amount of moral influence on every individual, as would result upon the whole, in the greatest good to his divine kingdom, he foresaw that certain individuals could with this wisest amount of moral influence be reclaimed and sanctified, and for this reason they were chosen to eternal life. By this we are not to understand that he foresaw that some men would be better by nature than others, and that because on this account they could be more easily turned to God; but that upon the whole they would be so circumstanced that it would be wise in God, in the administration of his government, to bring sufficient moral influence to bear upon them to subdue their opposition, and to save their souls.

VI. I am to show when the election was made.

The apostle says it was before the world began, or from eternity. It must have been when the plan of the divine government was settled in his mind, and the present mode of administration concluded upon. Some suppose that men are not elected until they are converted, and confound their election with their conversion. But this is neither reasonable nor scriptural. Christ will say to his saints in the judgment day; "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and certainly it is unreasonable to suppose that an unchangeable God has changed his mind in regard to an individual, and made a new choice, and elected him to eternal life when he sees that he is converted.

VII. I am to show that this election is not partial.

By partiality, we understand undue bias or favor towards one individual or party, founded upon some interest or prejudice. Some particular liking we have for one individual more than for others. I have already shown that election does not turn upon any thing in the character of the elect, or any particular prejudice or partiality which God has in their favor. The question of their election did not turn upon any thing in them, but upon the best interests of his government. In electing them, God did not look over the human family to see whom he loved best, but upon whom in the wisest administration of his government he could bring sufficient moral influence to bear to save them. It was no partiality to them, but a high and holy regard to the great interests of his immense kingdom that led to their election.

VIII. I am to show that there is no injustice in this.

God was under obligation to no one--he might in perfect justice have sent all mankind to hell. The doctrine of election will damn no one; by treating the non-elect according to their deserts he does them no injustice; and surely his exercising grace in the salvation of the elect is no act of injustice to the non-elect, and especially will this appear to be true if we take into consideration the fact that the only reason why the non-elect will not be saved is because they pertinaciously refuse salvation. He offers mercy to all. The atonement is

sufficient for all. All may come and are under an obligation to be saved. He strongly desires their salvation and does all that he wisely can to save them. Why then should the doctrine of election be thought unjust.

IX. Election opposes no obstacle to the salvation of the non-elect.

The choice of some to eternal life, on the ground that they can be converted under the wisest administration of government, is by no means throwing any difficulty in the way of the conversion of the non-elect; for with them God uses all the means that are consistent with wisdom to reclaim and save them. The conversion of the elect, instead of being an obstacle in the way, is a powerful inducement to the non-elect to turn and live. The conversion of the elect, sustaining such relations as they do to the multitudes of the non-elect, is among the most powerful motives that could be presented for the conversion of the non-elect.

X. This is the best that could upon the whole be done for the inhabitants of this world.

It is reasonable to infer from the infinite benevolence of God that the plan of his government includes the salvation of a greater number than could have been saved under any other mode of administration. This is as certain as that infinite benevolence must prefer a greater to less a good. To suppose that God would prefer a mode of administration that would accomplish the salvation of a less number than could be saved under some other mode, would manifestly be to accuse him of a want of benevolence. It is doubtless true that he could so vary the course of events as to save other individuals than he does. To convert more in one particular neighborhood, or family, or nation, or at one particular time, than he does.

Suppose there is a man in this city, who has so strongly entrenched himself in error that there is but one man in all the land who is so acquainted with his refuges of lies as to be able to answer his objections and rout him from his hiding-places. Now it is possible that if this individual could be brought in contact with him he might be converted: yet if he is employed in some distant part of the vineyard, his removal from that field of labor to this city, might not on the whole be most for the interest of God's kingdom; and more might fail of salvation through his removal here, than would be converted here by such removal. God has in view the good of his whole kingdom. He works upon a vast and comprehensive scale. He has no partialities for individuals, but moves forward in the administration of his government with his eye upon the general good, designing to convert the greatest number, and produce the greatest amount of happiness within his kingdom.

XI. Election does not supersede the necessity of means for the conversion of the elect.

They are chosen to salvation through the sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth. They must then hear, believe, and obey the truth. If the end is to be accomplished, the necessary means must be used: would a farmer, because he knew that God had settled it in his own mind whether he should have a crop or not, say that if he was to have a crop he would have it, whether he sowed his land or not? Would a sick man neglect to use means for the recovery of his health, because he knows that God has numbered his days, and that it was settled in the divine mind whether he would die or not? Certainly not. If the farmer is to have a crop, he must sow his field and use the necessary means. So if the sick man is to live, the means requisite for his recovery must be used. So in the cure of sinners, if means be not used, not even the elect can be saved, and those that neglect the means will never make their calling and election sure.

XII. The doctrine of election affords the only ground for encouragement in the use of means for the salvation of sinners.

Knowing as I do that the carnal mind is enmity against God; that men are utterly opposed to the way of salvation; that they hate the Gospel, and all the efforts that are made to save them; what encouragement should I have to preach the Gospel, were it not that I know that God has chosen some to eternal life, and that many or all my hearers may be of this number; and that his providence has collected you here, with a design to reach you with the arrows of his truth. It is this consideration alone that can afford any ground for encouragement to hold forth in your heaving the word of life.

XIII. I am to show how it may be known who are elected.

Those of the elect that are already converted are known by their character and conduct. They demonstrate the reality of their election by their obedience to God. Those that are unconverted may settle the question each one for himself whether he is elected or not, so as to have the most satisfactory evidence whether he is of that happy number. If you will now submit yourselves to God, you many know that you are elected. But every hour you put off submission, increases the evidence that you are not elected.

INFERENCES AND REMARKS.

I. Foreknowledge and election are not inconsistent with free agency, but are founded upon it. The elect were chosen to eternal life, because God foresaw that in perfect exercise of their freedom, they could be induced to repent and embrace the Gospel.

II. You see why many persons are opposed to the doctrine of election, and try to explain it away; 1st they misunderstand it, and 2d. they deduce unwarrantable inferences from it. They suppose it to mean, that the elect will be saved at all events, whatever their conduct may be; and again they infer from the doctrine that there is no possibility of the salvation of the non-elect. Their understanding of the doctrine would be an encouragement to the elect to persevere in sin, knowing that their salvation was sure, and their inference would drive the non-elect to desperation, on the ground that for them to make efforts to be saved would be of no avail. But both the doctrine, as they understand it, and the inference are false. For election does not secure the salvation of the elect irrespective of their character and conduct; nor, as we have seen, does it throw any obstacle in the way of the salvation of the non-elect.

III. This view of the subject affords no ground for presumption on the one hand, nor for despair upon the other. No one can justly say, If i am to be saved, I shall be saved, do what I will, Nor can any one say, if I am to be damned, I shall be damned, do what I will. But the question is left, so far as they are concerned, as a matter of entire contingency. Sinners, your salvation or damnation is as absolutely suspended upon your own choice, as if God neither knew or designed any thing about it.

IV. This doctrine lays no foundation for a controversy with God. But on the other hand it does lay a broad foundation for gratitude, both on the part of the elect and the non-elect. The elect certainly have great reason for thankfulness that they are thus distinguished. Oh what a thought, to have your name written in the book of life, to be chosen of God an heir of

eternal salvation, to be adopted into his family, to be destined to enjoy his presence, and to bathe your soul in the boundless ocean of his love forever and ever. Nor are the non-elect without obligations of thankfulness. You ought to be grateful if any of your brethren of the human family are saved. If all were lost, God would be just. And if any of your neighbors or friends, or any of this dying world receive the gift of eternal life, you ought to be grateful and render everlasting thanks to God.

V. The non-elect often enjoy as great or greater privileges than the elect. Many men have lived and died under the sound of the gospel, have enjoyed all the means of salvation during a long life, and have at last died in their sins, while others have been converted upon their first hearing the Gospel of God. Nor is this difference owing to the fact that the elect always have more of the strivings of the Spirit than the non-elect. Many who die in their sins appear to have had conviction for a great part of their lives; have often been deeply impressed with a sense of their sins and the value of their souls, but have strongly intrenched themselves under the refuge of lies, have loved the world and hated God, and fought their way through all the obstacles that were thrown around them to hedge up their way to death, and have literally forced their passage to the gates of hell.

VI. Why should the doctrine of election be made a stumbling block in the way of sinners. In nothing else do they make the same use of the purposes and designs of God, as on the subject of religion; any yet in every thing else God's purposes and designs are as much settled and have as absolute an influence. God as certainly designed the day and circumstances of your death as whether your soul shall be saved. It is not only expressly declared in the Bible, but is plainly the doctrine of reason. What would you say on going home from meeting, if you should be called in to see a neighbor who was sick, and on inquiry you should find he would neither eat nor drink, and that he was nearly starved to death: on expostulating with him upon his conduct, he should calmly reply, that he believed in the sovereignty of God, in foreknowledge, election, and decrees; that his days were numbered, that the time and circumstances of his death were settled, that he could not die before his time, and that all the efforts he could make would not enable him to live a moment beyond his time. If you attempted to remonstrate against his inference, and such an abuse and perversion of the doctrine of decreed, he should accuse you of being a heretic, of not believing in divine sovereignty. Now should you see a man on worldly subjects reasoning and acting thus, you would pronounce him crazy. Should farmers, mechanics, and merchants reason in this way in regard to their worldly business, they would be considered fit subjects for bedlam.

VII. How forcibly the perversion and abuse of this doctrine illustrate the madness of the human heart, and its utter opposition to the terms of salvation. The fact that God foreknows and has designs in regard to every other event, is not made an excuse for remaining idle or worse than idle on these subjects. But where their duty to God is concerned, and here alone, they seize the Scriptures and wrest them to their own destruction. How impressively does this fact bring out the demonstration that sinners want an excuse for disobeying God, that they desire an apology for living in sin, that they seek an occasion for making war upon their Maker.

VIII. I have said that the question is as much open for your decision, that you are left as perfectly to the exercise of your freedom, as if God neither knew nor designed any thing in regard to your salvation. Suppose there was a great famine in this city, and that John Jacob Astor alone had provisions in great abundance, that he was a benevolent and liberal-minded man, and willing to supply the whole city with provisions free of expense, and suppose there

existed a universal and most unreasonable prejudice against him, insomuch that when he advertised in the daily papers that his store-houses were open, that whosoever would might come and receive provisions, without money and without price, they all with one accord began to make excuse and obstinately refused to accept the offers. Now suppose that he should employ all the cartmen to carry provisions around the city, and stop at every door. But still they strengthened each others hands, and would rather die that be indebted to him for food. Many had said so much against him that they were utterly ashamed to feel and acknowledge their dependence upon him. Others were so much under their influence, as to be unwilling to offend them, and so strong was the tide of public sentiment, as that no one had the moral courage to break loose from the multitude and accept of life. Now suppose that Mr. Astor knew beforehand the state of the public mind, and that all the citizens hated him, and had rather die than be indebted to him for life. Suppose he also knew from the beginning that there were certain arguments that he could bring to bear upon certain individuals that would change their minds, and that he should proceed to press them with these considerations until they had given up their opposition, had most thankfully accepted his provisions, and were saved from death. Suppose he used all the arguments and means that he wisely could to persuade the rest, but that notwithstanding all his benevolent efforts they adhered to the resolution and preferred death to submission to his proposals. Now suppose he had perfect knowledge from the beginning, of the issue of this whole matter; would not the question of life and death be as entirely open for the decision of every individual as if he knew nothing about it.

IX. Some may ask why, does God use means with the non-elect, provided he is certain they will not accept? I answer because he designs that they shall be without excuse. He will demonstrate his willingness and their obstinacy before the universe. He will rid his garments of their blood; and although he knows that their rejection of the offer will only enhance their guilt and aggravate their deep damnation, still he will make the offer, as there is no other way in which to illustrate his infinite willingness to save them, and their perverse rejection of his grace.

Lastly, God requires you to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure. In choosing his elect, you must understand, that he has thrown the responsibility of their being saved upon them, that the whole is suspended upon their consent to the terms; you are all perfectly able to give your consent, and this moment to lay hold on eternal life. Irrespective of your own choice no election can save you, and no reprobation can damn you. The spirit and the bride say Come, let him that heareth say Come, let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely. The responsibility is yours. God does all that he wisely can, and challenges you to show what more he could do that he has not done. If you go to hell, you must go stained with your own blood. God is clear, angels are clear. To your own master your stand or fall; mercy waits, the Spirit strives; Jesus stands at the door and knocks; do not then pervert this doctrine, and make it an occasion of stumbling till you are in the depth of hell.

SERMON XI.

REPROBATION.

-- Jeremiah vi. 30.--
"Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the lord hath rejected them."

This lecture was typed in by Valerie Mitchell.

These words were spoken of a generation of Israel with whom God had used every suitable means to reclaim and save them; and who had withstood them all, and had remained obstinate and impenitent to the last. God says to them, "O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes; make thee mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentations, for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us."

"I have set thee," he says to the prophet, "for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know and try their ways. They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.:" This is a striking instance of the use of figurative languages in the Bible, as the best possible means of conveying truth. Literal language may vary its meaning; may be understood differently by different individuals, and change with the lapse of years. But figurative language always remains the same, conveys the same ideas, in all ages and to all nations. Here the people of Israel were compared to metal which a refiner was trying to purify in the fire. The means which God had used to sanctify them, are compared to fire, and the refiner is represented as having raised his heat to such a degree as to burn the bellows, and, as it were, to consume the metal itself by the intensity of the heat; and yet could not succeed in separating the dross from the silver. He then pronounces it reprobate, or refuse silver, fit only to be thrown away. That is, the house of Israel were incorrigible; and the more strenuously God pressed the means of their sanctification, the more did their reprobacy and obstinacy manifest itself. God therefore declared that men should call them reprobate, and should understand and say that the Lord had rejected them.

You will perceive that my present object is to discuss the doctrine of REPROBATION. The following is the order in which I shall present the subject:

1st. Show what I understand by the doctrine.

2d. What are not the reasons on which this doctrine is founded.

3d. What are the reasons.

4th. When men are reprobated.

5th. Why the reprobate were created.

6th. That the reprobate are not lost because they were reprobated.

7th. That the salvation of the reprobate is still suspended upon their own choice, and put within their own power.

8th. That the doctrine of reprobation is just.

9th. That it is impartial.

10th. That it is benevolent.

11th. It is the best thing that can be done for the universe, all things considered.

12th. How it may be known who are reprobates.

You will see that I must very much condense what I design to say under each of these heads, and content myself with giving but an outline of this important doctrine. The subject is so copious, that in looking over it, my mind has been embarrassed to know what to leave out, rather than what to say. It is like a mine of gold, the deeper you go the richer the vein.

I. What is the doctrine of reprobation.

The term signifies something refuse, good for nothing, rejected as of no use. To reprobate a thing is to pronounce it good for nothing, rejected, cast away. The reprobate among mankind are they who are to be lost, to be cast out from the presence of God, and the glory of his power for ever. It is not part of my present design to prove that any part of mankind will be finally lost. I am preaching to a congregation who admit this to be true. To attempt to prove this therefore is unnecessary and irrelevant on the present occasion. It is only necessary now to say that those who will be finally rejected and lost are the reprobates.

II. I am to show what are not the reasons upon which this doctrine is founded.

In other words, what are not the reasons that reprobates are lost.

- 1. Not because God has any malevolent feelings to gratify or any ill-will towards all his creatures. He never feels malevolently towards the most wicked beings in the universe. He blames them, and feels grieved and indignant at their conduct, but he is never malevolent. God is often represented in the Bible as being angry with the wicked; and these representations are just, and the Bible means as it says. He is angry, but his anger is not malevolent. He has the feelings of a good governor, who sees rebels arrayed against the government, introducing disorder, and destroying public and private happiness. God feels a benevolent opposition to such conduct, a holy indignation, in degree equal to his love of virtue and happiness. His love to the public good makes him resolute and firm in executing the laws against them.

- 2. They are not reprobated because the glory of God or the interest of the universe require their damnation, if they will repent. Some have represented the reprobation and damnation of a part of mankind, as indispensable to the glory of God and the good of the universe. They have supposed that God's whole moral character could in no other way be displayed. They suppose that sin was the necessary means of the greatest good, and that God decreed the sins, the reprobacy, and damnation of the finally impenitent as the only means of developing before the universe the whole circle of divine

attributes, and producing upon the whole the greatest amount of good. That consequently, he really prefers the existence of sin to it's non-existence, rebellion to obedience, the damnation of a part of mankind, to the salvation of the whole. Now I look upon this to be a dangerous error, to be highly dishonorable to God, injurious to his government, and in a high degree calculated to stir up rebellion against his throne. I do not suppose that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, and I look upon punishment as rendered necessary only because moral agents have not been, and will not be, obedient without witnessing execution of law. If all the subjects of God's government had continued obedient, a practical illustration of Divine justice had been uncalled for. If without the infliction of the penalty, all God's subjects had continued to obey, it would not have been to the glory of God, but to the infinite dishonor of God, to have sent any one to hell. Such strong measures as the execution of the infinite penalty of God's law, so far from being called for in the abstract, and essential to his glory, are only warrantable and appear glorious in him, when all milder means fail to procure and perpetuate obedience. I would ask, what is the particular use in developing the attribute of justice, but to procure respect for God's authority, and thus secure obedience? But if men were obedient without this practical illustration or exhibition of justice, certainly punishment would be uncalled for.

God's glory required that men should be reprobated and damned simply in view of the fact, that they would sin and persist in rebellion; not that his glory required both their rebellion and damnation, in preference to their obedience and salvation.

- 3. Men are not reprobated for want of any sufficiency in the atonement. That is an injurious representation of the atonement, which exhibits it simply as a commercial transaction; as if the persons in the God head had made a bargain, in which the Son agreed to pay the Father so much suffering for so much sin committed, like the payment of a promissory note, the exact amount of suffering paid by the surety which was due to the guilty. This is injurious in many respects.

First, it excludes the idea of mercy from the government of God; for what grace or mercy is there in discharging an obligation when the debt is paid? Furthermore, it is gaining nothing, if Christ must have suffered just as much as sinners would have suffered had they been sent to hell; there is just as much suffering in the universe as if the penalty of the law had been visited upon the head of every sinner. Some who have maintained this idea of the atonement, to avoid the inevitable conclusion, that if the debt were literally paid for all, then all would be saved, have maintained that no atonement was made but for the elect, and represent the non-elect as entirely unprovided for in the atonement as the devils are. This represents God as having sold the elect to his Son for so much, and as leaving the rest to go to hell without any chance for salvation. Neither my Bible, my intellect, my conscience, nor my heart, will for one moment admit such a view of the atonement to be true. The atonement is a transaction of such a nature as to render the salvation of every sinner possible, but not calculated nor designed so to pay the debt of any sinner as to make his salvation an act of justice. It provides for the salvation of all men; but of itself makes sure the salvation of no man. If not one had been saved, it would have reflected infinite glory on the character of God; displayed, in the most

striking and impressive manner, his whole heart on the subject of his law, its precepts, penalty, and the desert of sin; and if all men should reject it, it would still be glorious, and throw a radiance around the sceptre of his justice that would light their footsteps to the gates of hell.

But III. What are the reasons why reprobates are rejected and lost?

Because they are unwilling to be saved; that is, they are unwilling to be saved on the terms upon which alone God can consistently save them. Ask sinners whether they are willing to be saved, and they all say yes; and with perfect sincerity they may say this, if they can be saved upon their own terms. But when you propose to them the terms of salvation upon which the Gospel proposes to save them; when they are required to repent and believe the gospel, to forsake their sins, and give themselves up to the service of God, they will with one consent begin to make excuse. Now, to accept these terms, is heartily and practically to consent to them. For them to say that they are willing to accept salvation while they actually do not accept it, is to utter an infamous falsehood. To be willing is to accept it; and the fact that they do not heartily consent to, and embrace the terms of salvation , is demonstration absolute, that they are unwilling. Yes, sinners, the only terms on which you can possibly be saved, you reject. Is it not then an insult to God for you to pretend that you are willing? The only true reason that any of you are not Christians, is that you are unwilling; you are not made unwilling by any act of God, because you are a reprobate; but if you are a reprobate, it is because you are unwilling.

But do any of you object and say, why does not God make us willing? Is it not because he has reprobated us, that he does not change our hearts and make us willing? No, sinner, it is not because he has reprobated you; but because you are so obstinate that he cannot, wisely, and consistency with the public good, take such measures as will convert you. Here you are waiting for God to make you willing to go to heaven, and all the while you are diligently using the means to get to hell. Yes, exerting yourself with greater diligence to get to hell, than it would cost to insure you salvation, if applied with equal zeal in the service of your God. You tempt God, and then turn round and ask him why he does not make you willing! Now, sinner, let me ask you, do you think you are a reprobate? If so, what do you think the reason is that has led the infinitely benevolent God to reprobate you? There must be some reason, what do you suppose it is? Did you ever seriously ask yourself, what is the reason that a wise and infinitely benevolent God has never made me willing to accept salvation? It must be for one of the following reasons; either

He is a malevolent being, and desires your damnation for its own sake;

Or, he cannot make you willing if he would;

Or, you behave in such a manner that, to his infinitely benevolent mind it appears unwise to take such a course as would bring you to repentance.

Now, which of these do you think it is? You will not probably take the ground that he is malevolent, and desires your damnation because he delights in misery; nor will you, I suppose, take the ground that he could not covert you if he would.

The other, then, must be the reason, to wit: that your heart, and conduct, and stubbornness, are so abominable in his sight that, every thing considered, he sees that to use such further

means with you as to secure your conversion, would, upon the whole, do more hurt than good to his kingdom. I have not time tonight to agitate the question whether you, as a moral agent, could not resist any possible amount of moral influence that could be brought to bear upon you, consistently with your moral freedom. That subject I design to discuss on a future occasion.

Do you ask, how I know that the reason why God does not make you willing is, that he sees that it would be unwise in him to do so? I answer, that it is an irresistible inference, from these two facts, that he is infinitely benevolent, and that he does not actually make you willing. I do not believe that God would neglect anything that he saw to be wise and benevolent in the great matter of man's salvation. Who can believe that he can give his only begotten and well beloved son to die for sinners, and then neglect any other benevolent means for their salvation? No, sinner, if you are reprobate, it is because God foresaw that you would do just as you are doing; that you would be so wicked as to defeat all the efforts that he could wisely make for your salvation. What a variety of means he has used with you. At one time he has thrown you into the furnace of affliction; and when this has not softened you, he has turned round and loaded you with benefits. He has sent you his word, he has striven by his Spirit, he has allured you by the cross; he has tried to melt you by the groanings of Calvary, and tried to drive you back from the way to death by rolling in your ears the thunders of damnation. At one time clouds and darkness have been round about you; the heavens have thundered over your head, divine vengeance has hung out all around your horizon the portentous clouds of coming wrath. At another time mercy has smiled upon you from above like the noon-days sun, breaking through an ocean of storms. He urges every motive; he lays heaven, earth and hell under perpetual contributions for considerations to move your stony heart. But you deafen your ears, and close your eyes, and harden your heart, and say, "cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us." And what is the inference from all this? how must all this end? Reprobate silver shall men call thee, because the Lord hath rejected them.

IV. When are men reprobated?

As it respects God, from eternity. But as it respects men they are reprobated when they become refuse and good for nothing. As God knew from eternity how every event would be; how every sinner in the universe would behave himself--as this was always present to his mind as much as it ever will be--his decision upon it all, must have been from eternity just what it always will be. So far as the making up of his own mind is concerned, he needs only to have all the evidence in the case, and this he has always had, as much as he ever will have. If, at the day of judgment, he will see cause to reprobate them, and send them to hell, he has always seen this cause, and always been of one mind upon this subject. But so far as the reprobates themselves are concerned, they become reprobates when they pertinaciously, and finally refuse to accept eternal life on the terms of the Gospel. The doctrine of reprobation is just like the doctrine of election, in this respect, as existing in the mind of God; like all other purposes of the Divine mind, it is eternal. He has no new thoughts, nor new knowledge, nor purposes, nor designs. But as it respects us, reprobation is just like election, conditional, a contingency. It is just so on every other subject; man's life and death are all fixed, and his days are numbered. God has set the bounds of his habitation that he cannot pass, and all the circumstances of his life and death are settled; yet, who does not know that the time of every man's death, so far as he himself is concerned, is a matter of entire contingency; that his days may be lengthened or shortened by his own conduct; that years, and scores of years, may be added to, or subtracted from his life, through the instrumentality of his own agency. The fact of its being settled in the mind of God does not

alter the contingency with regard to us. It is to us just as much a matter of contingency as if neither God nor any being in the universe had any fore-knowledge of the event. So in regard to our salvation or damnation; although God is perfectly acquainted with what the result will be, still the event is to us, just as contingent and just as much suspended upon our own voluntary agency, as if God knew nothing about it. The event alone develops to us what was before a certainty in the mind of God.

V. Why did God create the reprobate?

If God knew beforehand that such multitudes would sin, and behave themselves so wickedly that he should be obliged to cast them off forever, did he not create them on purpose to damn them? I answer, no. He made them not to damn them, but for other and important purposes. It is true that he knew they would be damned, and created them notwithstanding this knowledge. It is not for this reason that he created them, but in spite of it. He had other and so-weighty reasons for their creation that he created them for these beneficial reasons, not for the purpose of sending them to hell: but so urgent were the reasons for their creation, that he proceeded, notwithstanding the knowledge of their frightful end was full before his mind. There are many wise and benevolent purposes answered by the existence of reprobates, that we can discern; and doubtless, many other reasons with which we shall be acquainted hereafter. In spite of their wicked intentions, God makes use of them to do a great deal of good. The devil himself has been an important agent in some of the most glorious transactions in the universe. But no thanks to him. When he put in into the heart of Judas to betray Christ, he manifestly intended it for evil, but God meant it, and over ruled it for good: neither he nor Judas intended to glorify God or benefit mankind; but they actually were both concerned in slaying the very corner stone of man's salvation. Wicked men are often in stations indispensable to the welfare of society. The existence of reprobates is indispensable to the existence of the elect, for they are often the parents of the elect; while they themselves are cast away in consequence of their rebellion, their children are often converted, sanctified, and saved.

If the non-elect were never created, the elect could never live. In building up the kingdom of Christ, God often employs the hands of wicked men. To be sure, it is not their intention to build up the kingdom of God, but they lay such a train of events, that in the pursuit of their selfish ends they are often instrumental in promoting his kingdom.

There is a wicked man who hates God and religion; he loves the world and is hoarding up a great deal of wealth for his children. He gives them a finished education, designs them to shine in the world, and cares not how much injury they do to the cause of Christ. But God meets them by his Spirit, converts and sanctifies them, and leads them to devote the hard earnings of their ungodly father to the building up and extension of his holy kingdom. Thus proving that "the wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just."

VI. I am to show that men are not lost because they are reprobated.

That is, their reprobation is not the reason why they are lost. God does not condemn them because they are reprobated, but because they are wicked. It is their own act that leads him to send them to hell, and not his act in reprobating them. He reprobates and punishes them for their sins, because that, in spite of all he could wisely do to reclaim them, they would remain in their sins. He always foresaw how wicked they would be, and always designed to treat them accordingly.

VII. The salvation or damnation of the reprobate is suspended on their own choice.

This, sinner, is the turning point. If you choose the way of life, you will be saved; if you choose the way of sin, you will be damned.

Your creation as moral agents, and making you the subjects of moral government, suspends your salvation upon your own choice, and renders salvation impossible to you in any other way. If you are reprobated, it is because, when the choice is given you, you choose wrong and obstinately persist in it. The reason why God rejects you, is because you reject him. He reprobates you, because you reprobate him. He does it because you do it, and for no other reason. But will some object, and say the heathen never had the offer of salvation; and the decree, therefore, respecting them, must have been irrespective of their conduct? I answer, this is a grand mistake. God judges men according to the light they have. They that sin without law, shall also perish without law, says the apostle Paul; and they that sin under the law, shall be judged by the law. Those who have only the light of nature, if they improve and obey that light, shall be saved. But Paul affirms that the heathen do not do this. He says that they are unwilling to retain God in their knowledge, and that for this reason they have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of corruptible men, and four footed beasts, and creeping things; so that they are without excuse. They violate their own rules of action; they do what they know to be wrong; their thoughts meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another.--They practice those things which they condemn in others, and thus pass sentence upon themselves; and for this they may be justly reprobated.

VIII. Reprobation is just.

Is it not just in God to let men have their own choice, especially when the highest possible motives are held out to them as inducements to choose eternal life? What! is it not just to reprobate men when they obstinately refuse salvation? When every thing has been done that is consistent with infinite wisdom and benevolence to save them? Shall not men be willing to be either saved or lost? What shall God do with you? You are unwilling to be saved; why then should you object to being damned. If reprobation under these circumstances is not just, I challenge you, sinner, to tell what is just.

IX. Reprobation is impartial.

It has always been found convenient, by the opposers of election and reprobation, to represent them as partial. If by partial be meant that some are elected and not others, that some are reprobated and not others; in other words, that a part of mankind only are elected or reprobated; I have no objections to the term. But if by partial we are to understand any undue favor towards one, or want of favor to the other; if by partiality be meant that God reprobated some rather than others, on account of any prejudice, or improper bias against them, or on account of any particular dislike which he felt towards them more than towards the elect; if this be what is meant by a partial reprobation, I utterly deny it, and maintain that reprobation is entirely impartial. That it is an impartial act that takes into view all the circumstances of the case, and acts for the general good without any undue bias in favor or against any one. I have already endeavored to show the reasons for reprobating sinners relate entirely to their own wickedness, and the public interest; the public interest requiring their reprobation and damnation, because they refuse to obey God.

X. Reprobation is benevolent.

It was benevolent in God to create men, though he foresaw that they would sin and become reprobates. If he foresaw that upon the whole he could insure such an amount of virtue and happiness under the influence of moral government, as to counterbalance the sin and misery of those who would be lost, then certainly it was a dictate of benevolence to create them. The question was, whether moral beings should be created, and moral government established, when it was foreseen that a great evil would be the incidental consequence. Whether this would be benevolent or not, must turn upon the question whether a good might be secured that would more than counterbalance the evil. If the virtue and happiness that could be secured by the administration of moral government, would greatly outmeasure the incidental evils arising out of a defection of a part of the subjects of this government, it is manifest that a truly benevolent mind would choose to establish the government, the attendant evils to the contrary notwithstanding. Now, if those who are lost deserve their misery, and bring it upon themselves, by their own choice, when they might have been saved, then certainly in their damnation there can be nothing inconsistent with justice or benevolence. God must have a moral government, or there can be no such thing as holiness in the created universe. For holiness in a creature is nothing else than a voluntary conformity to the government of God.

Doubtless God views the loss of the soul as a great evil, and he always will look upon it as such, and would gladly avoid the loss of every soul, if it were consistent with the wisest administration of his government. How slanderous, injurious, and offensive to God it must be, then, to say that he created sinners on purpose to damn them. He pours forth all the tender yearnings of a father over those whom he is obliged to destroy--"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim; how shall I deliver thee, Israel; how shall I make thee as Admah, how shall I set thee as Zeboim; my heart is turned within me, my repenting are kindled together." And now, sinner, can you sit here and find it in your heart to accuse the blessed God of a want of benevolence. "O ye serpents! ye generation of vipers!" how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

XI. Reprobation is the best thing that can be done for the universe, all things considered.

Since the penalty of the law, although infinite, under the wisest possible administration of moral government, could not secure universal obedience; and since multitudes of sinners will not be reclaimed and saved by the Gospel, one of three things must be done: either moral government must be given up, or the wicked must be annihilated, or they must be reprobated and sent to hell. Now, that moral government should be given up, will not be pretended; annihilation would not be just, inasmuch as it would not be visiting sin with what it justly deserves. Now, as sinners really deserve eternal death, and as their punishment may be of real value to the universe, in creating a respect for the authority of God, and thus strengthening his government, it is plain that their reprobation and damnation is for the general good, and making the best use of the wicked that can be made.

XII. How it may be known who are reprobates.

It may be difficult for us to ascertain with certainty in this world, who are reprobates; but there are so many marks of reprobation given in the Bible, that by a sober and judicious investigation, we may form a pretty correct opinion whether we or those around us are reprobates or not.

- 1st. One evidence of reprobation, is a long course of prosperity in sin. The psalmist lays it down as such in the 93d Psalm:--"When the wicked spring as the grass, and

when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever." God often gives the wicked their portion in this world, and lets them prosper and wax fat like a stalled ox, and then brings them forth to the slaughter. "The wicked are reserved unto the day of wrath." Where, therefore, you see an individual for a long time prospering in his sins, there is fearful reason to fear that man is a reprobate.

- 2d. Habitual neglect of the means of grace is a mark of reprobation. If men are to be saved at all, it is through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; and it will probably be found to be true, that not one in ten thousand is saved of those who habitually absent themselves from places where God presents his claims. Sometimes, I know, a tract, or the conversation or prayer of some friend, may awaken an individual and lead him to the house of God; but, as a general fact, if a man stays away from the means of grace, and neglects his Bible, it is a fearful sign of reprobacy, and that he will die in his sins. He is voluntary in it, and he does not neglect the means of grace because he is reprobated, but was reprobated because God foresaw that he would take this course. Suppose a pestilence were prevailing, that was certain to prove fatal in every instance where the appropriate remedy was not applied. Now, if you wish to know whose days were numbered and finished, and who among the sick were certain to die with the disease, if you found any among them neglecting and despising the only appropriate remedy, you would know that they are the persons.

All this was known to God as certainly beforehand as afterwards. Now, if you wish to know who are reprobates in this city, or in any city or village, look abroad upon the multitude of Sabbath breakers, swearers, drinkers, and whoremongers; upon the young men that "assemble in troops at the harlot's house;" or the boys and young men that you may see assemble on the Sabbath before grog shops, or at the corners of the street, with their cigars, their bloated cheeks, and swollen bloodshot eyes. Look through the length and breadth of the land, and see the thousands of young men who are utterly neglecting and despising eternal salvation. O horrible! poor dying young men, not one in a thousand of them is likely to be saved; perhaps some of them came from a family of prayer, where they use to kneel morning and evening around the domestic altar. And now where are they? and where are they going? They are already within the sweep of that mighty whirlpool, whose circling waters are drawing them nearer and nearer the roaring vortex. They dance, and trifle, and sport themselves. They heed not the voice that cries from heaven, nor the wail that comes up from hell, but nearer and nearer, with accelerated motion, they circle round and round till they are swallowed up and lost in the abyss of damnation.

- 3d. Where persons are entirely destitute of the strivings of the Spirit. I speak not of those who never heard the Gospel; but in gospel lands it is doubtful whether any, except they are given up of God, live without more or less of the strivings of the Holy Spirit. Where, therefore, it is found that his strivings have entirely ceased with any mind, that soul has solemn and alarming evidence that is given up of God. God says, "Yea, also, woe unto them when I depart from them."

- 4th. Where persons have passed through a revival, and are not converted, it affords evidence that they are reprobates. I mean here, not conclusive, but presumptive evidence; and this presumption grows stronger and stronger every time an individual passes such a season without conversion. It is common for persons, in seasons of

revival, to have more or less conviction, but to grieve away the Spirit. Some such persons are perhaps here tonight, and perhaps dreaming away one more offer of eternal salvation. If you have once resisted the Spirit until he is quenched, I have but little hope that anything I can say will do any good. The great probability is that you will be lost.

- 5th Those who have grown old in sin, are probably reprobates. It is a solemn and alarming fact, that a vast majority of those who give evidence of piety are converted under twenty-five years of age. Look at the history of revivals, and see even in those that have had the greatest power, how few aged persons are converted. The men who are set upon the attainment of some worldly objects, and determined to secure that before they will attend to religion, and yield to the claims of the Maker, expecting afterwards to be converted, are almost always disappointed. Such a cold calculation is odious in the sight of God. What! take advantage of his forbearance, and say, that because he is merciful you will venture to continue in sin till you have secured your worldly objects, and worn yourselves out in the service of the devil, and then turn your Maker off with the jaded remnant of your abused mortality! You need not expect God to set his seal of approbation upon such a calculation as this, and suffer you at last to triumph, and say that you had served the devil as long as you pleased, and got to heaven at last.

You see such a man passing on from twenty years old and upwards, and the probabilities of his conversion fearfully diminish every year. Sinner, are you forty years old? Now look over the list of conversions in the last revival, how few among them are of your age? Perhaps some of you are fifty or sixty! How seldom can you find one of your age converted. There is only here and there one; they are few and far between, like beacons on distant mountain tops, scattered sparsely long, just to keep old sinners from absolute despair. Aged sinner, it is more than fifty chances to one that you are a reprobate.

- 6th. Absence of chastisements is a sign of reprobation. God says in the epistle to the Hebrews, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not; but if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

- 7th. When men are chastened, and not reformed by it, it is a mark of reprobation. A poet has said, "When pain cannot bless, heaven quits us in despair." God says of such, "Why should ye be stricken any more, ye will revolt more and more." When your afflictions are unsanctified, when you harden yourselves under his stripes, why should he not leave you to fill up the measure of your iniquity.

- 8th. Embracing damnable heresies is another mark of reprobation.

Where persons seem to be given up to believe a lie, there is solemn reason for fearing that they are among that number upon whom God sends strong delusions, that they may believe a lie, and be damned, because they believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Where you see persons giving themselves up to such delusions, the more honestly they believe them, the greater reason there is for believing that they are reprobates. The truth is so plain, that with the Bible in your hands, it is next to impossible to believe a fundamental heresy, without being given up to the judicial curse of God. It is so hard to believe a lie, with the truth of the Bible before you, that the devil cannot do it. If, therefore, you reject your Bible, and embrace a fundamental falsehood, you are more stupid and benighted than the devil is. When a man professes to believe a lie, about the only hope of his salvation that remains, it is, that he does not cordially believe it. Sinner, beware how you trifle with God's truth. How often have individuals began to argue in favor of heresy, for the sake of argument and because they loved debate, until they have finally come to believe their own lie, and are lost for ever!

REMARKS.

1. The salvation of reprobates is impossible only because they make it so, by their own wicked conduct.

2. God will turn the damnation of the reprobate to good account. In establishing his government, he foresaw that great evils would be incidental to it-that multitudes would sin, and persevere in rebellion, until they were lost, notwithstanding all that could consistently be done to save them. Yet he foresaw that a vastly greater good would result from the virtue and happiness of holy beings, and that he, also, could make a good use even of the punishment of the wicked. Here is an instance of the Divine economy in turning every thing to the best account. I do not mean that the damnation of the wicked results in greater good than their salvation would be, if they would repent. If their salvation could be secured, by any means that would consist with the highest good of the universe, it would be greatly to be preferred. But, as this cannot be, he will do the best that the nature of the case admits. When he cannot save them, he will, by their punishment, erect a monument to his justice, and lay its foundation deep in hell, and build it up to heaven, that being seen afar off in the smoke of their torment that ascendeth up for ever and ever, it may ever stand as an affecting memento of the hatefulness and desert of sin.

3. It is very wicked and blasphemous to complain of God, when he has done the best that Infinite Wisdom, Benevolence and Power could do. Who should complain? Surely not the elect; they have no reason to complain. Shall the reprobate complain, when he has actually forced upon God the necessity of giving up his government, or of sending him to hell?

4. Reprobates are bound to praise God. He has created and given you many blessings, sinners, and offers you eternal life; and will you refuse to praise him?

5. God has every reason to complain of you, sinner. How much good you might do! see how much good individuals have often done! Now, of all the good you might do, you rob God. While eternity rolls its everlasting rounds, on how many errands of love you might go, diffusing happiness to the utmost bounds of Jehovah's empire? But you refuse to obey him; you are in league with hell, and prefer to scatter fire-brands, arrows, and death, to destroy your own soul, and lead others to perdition with you. You drive on in your career, and help to set in motion all the elements of rebellion in earth and hell. Will you complain of God? He has reason to complain of you. He is the injured party. He has created you, has held you

in his hand, and fanned your heaving lungs; and, in return, you have breathed out your breath in rebellion, and blasphemy, and contempt of God, and compelled him to pronounce you reprobate.

6. There is reason to believe that there are many reprobates in the church. This is the probable history of many professors of religion. They had convictions of sin, and after a while their distress, more or less, suddenly abated. If their distress had been considerable; if the Spirit left them, their minds would naturally go toward the opposite extreme. When their convictions left them, they thought, perhaps, this was conversion; this very perhaps created a sensation of pleasure, and the thought that this felt pleasure was evidence that they were converted, would naturally increase their confidence. As their confidence increased, their joy at the thought of being saved would be increased. This selfish joy has been the foundation upon which they have built their hopes for eternity; and now you see them in the church, transacting business upon worldly principles, pleading for sin, and finding a thousand apologies for conformity to the world. They live on in sin, perhaps not openly vicious, but negligent of duty, cold and formal reprobates, and go down to hell from the bosom of the church.

7. Reprobates live to fill up the measure of their iniquity.

We are informed that the Amorites were spared, not because there was any hope of their reformation, but because their cup of iniquity was not yet full. Christ said to the Jews, "Fill ye up the measure of your fathers;" and God said to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose have I sustained thee, that I might show in thee my mighty power." Oh, dreadful thought! live to fill up the measure of your sins! the cup of trembling and of wrath is also filling up, which shall be soon poured out to you without mixture, when there shall be none to deliver you. Your judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and your damnation slumbereth not.

8. Saints should not envy sinners.

The Psalmist once had this trial. He says truly, "God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart; but as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped, for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; for there are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places, thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terror." How can a saint envy them, standing upon a slippery steep, with fiery billows rolling beneath them! "their feet shall slide in due time." Christians, don't envy the wicked, though they enjoy the wealth of the world; do not envy them; poor creatures! their time is short, they have almost had all their good things.

Probably there are individuals here, to whom I have been preaching, that have not been in the least benefited by any thing I have said, or could say. You have set yourselves to oppose God, and have taken such an attitude, that truth never reaches you to do you good. Now, sinner, if you do this, and go home in this state of mind, tonight you will have additional evidence that God has given you up, and that you are a reprobate. Now, will you go away in your sins, under these circumstances? Don't talk of the doctrine of election or reprobation as being in your way. No man is ever reprobated for any other reason than that he is an obstinate sinner.

Have you not tonight been listening to find something in this sermon that you can stumble over? Take care; if you wish to canvil, you can always find occasions enough. Sinners have stumbled over every other doctrine of the Bible into hell, and you may stumble over this.

What would you say of any man that should go home tonight and cut his throat, and say he did it because God foreknew that he would do it, and by creating him with this foreknowledge, designed that he should do it. Would saying that excuse him? No. Yet he is under just as much necessity of doing it as he is of going away from this house in his sins.

You only show that you are determined to harden your hearts, and resist God, and thus compel the holy Lord God to reject you. There is no doctrine of the Bible that can save you, if you persevere in sin, and none that can damn you, if you repent and embrace the Gospel. The blood of Christ flows freely. The fountain is open Sinner, what say you? Will you have eternal life? will you have it now, or will you reject it? Will you trample the law under foot, and stumble over the Gospel to the depths of hell?

SERMON XII.

LOVE OF THE WORLD.

-- 1 John ii. 15.--
"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."

This lecture was typed in Eugene Detweiler.

In discussing this subject I shall pursue the following order: --

1. *What we are to understand by the love of the world.*

2. *Who love the wold in this sense.*

3. *That they do not love God.*

I. What are we to understand by the love of the world.

Negatively. The love of the world here spoken of, is not every kind or degree of desire for worldly objects. God has so constituted us, that a certain amount, and certain kinds of worldly objects, are indispensible to our existence. We need food and raiment, implements of husbandry and trade, and various worldly things. The proper desire of which is not sinful, nor inconsistent with the love of God.

But to love the world, is to make worldly things the principal objects of desire and pursuit.

To love them, and desire them more than to love God and man, to be more anxious to obtain them, and spend more time in their acquisition, than in efforts to glorify God, and save the souls of men, is to love the world in the sense of the text. Where the love of God and of men is supreme in the heart, there may be a suitable desire for worldly objects; but, where an individual manifests a disposition to give the acquisition of wealth, or of worldly objects the preference, and aims rather at obtaining worldly things than at glorifying God and of doing good to men, it is certain that the love of the world is supreme in his heart.

II. Who do this?

- 1. All who cheat and defraud to obtain the things of the world. That a man who will cheat and defraud his neighbor, does not love him as he does himself, is too manifest to require proof. That a man who will disobey God for the purpose of obtaining worldly goods, does not love God supremely, is self-evident. Nay, that he loves the things of the world supremely, is a simple matter of fact.

- 2. All those whose anxieties and cares are mostly about worldly things. If they are more careful for the things of the world-- more anxious and earnest in the pursuit of them, than in glorifying God and in doing good to men, they love the world supremely.

Objection. But do any of you ask, May not a man be anxious to obtain worldly things, for the purpose of doing good with money? I answer, a man may be desirous to obtain money for the purpose of glorifying God with it; but, in that case the principal anxiety, and care, and desire, would not terminate upon the acquisition of money, but upon the end which he hoped to accomplish through its instrumentality. To suppose that a man, whose supreme object is to glorify God and do good to man, should concern himself principally about worldly things, is the same absurdity as to suppose, that he was more anxious about the means than about the end which he hoped to accomplish by these means. It is the end that gives value to the means. It is the end that is the main object of thought and of desire; and to suppose that a man's anxieties and cares would cluster about the means of effecting the end, rather than about the end itself, is plainly absurd and impossible.

Suppose a gentleman was engaged to be married, and has commenced a journey for that purpose. His heart is greatly set upon the end he has in view, and is it likely that either the delights or cares of his journey will occupy more of his thoughts, and absorb more of his affections than the object for which he has undertaken the journey. Who does not know that, in such a case, if his heart was greatly set upon the obtaining of his bride, he would pass from stage to stage without being hardly conscious of the incidents that occurred in his progress. His bride and his marriage would fill up his thoughts by day, and be the subject of his dreams by night; and all his cares and desires, that the stages and steamboats should convey him more rapidly, would be for the more speedy accomplishment of his heart's desire. And now, shall a man who loves God supremely, and whose desire for money and for worldly goods, is that he may glorify God, and benefit mankind thereby, can he be so anxious and so busy about the means as to lose sight of the end? that his interest in the end to be accomplished is swallowed up in efforts to obtain the means? This cannot be. And now I

appeal to the two classes of persons already mentioned; you that practice fraud, and take advantage of the ignorance of men, and over-reach, and cheat them in little or great things, do you pretend to love God? If so, you are an arrant hypocrite.

And you, who are filled with cares about worldly things, whose time, and thoughts, and affections are swallowed up in efforts to obtain them, know assuredly that you love the world, and that the love of God is not in you.

- 3d. All those who consult only their own interest in the transaction of business.

God requires you to love your neighbour as yourself. Again he says, "let every one look not upon his own things, but upon the things of others." "Let every one seek not his own, but another's wealth." These are express requirements of God; they are the very spirit and substance of the Gospel. Benevolence is a desire to do good to others. A willingness to deny self, for the purpose of promoting the interest of your neighbor, is the very spirit of Christ, it is the heart and soul of his Gospel. Now, suppose a man, in his bargains with others, aims only at promoting his own interest; he seeks not another's, but his own wealth. He looks not to the welfare of others, but his eye and his heart are upon his own side of the bargain. He does not aim at benefiting the individual with whom he transacts business; his only object is to take care of himself. This is the very opposite of the spirit of the Gospel. Does this man love his neighbour as himself? Does he love that God supremely, who has prohibited all selfishness, on pain of eternal death? No! If he loved God, he would not disobey him, for the sake of making money. If he loved his neighbor as himself; if he felt that it was more blessed to give than to receive; if he had the spirit of the Gospel, he would of course feel and manifest as great a desire for the interest of those with whom he deals, as for his own interest. He would be as anxious to give, as to get a good bargain; nay, he would be more so. Self-denial, to promote the happiness and the interest of others, would be his joy, would constitute his happiness, would be that to which he would be inclined, of course. And now let me ask you who are here present, can you deny this principle? What then is your spiritual state? Have you the love of God in you? How do you transact business? Do you consult the interest of those with whom you deal, as much as you do your own? or in all your bargains, do you aim simply at securing a profit to yourself? If you do, the love of God is not in you. You have not the beginning of piety in your heart.

- 4th. All those that feel chagrined and grieved when they find that the person with whom they have dealt has the best of the bargain, and has made a greater profit than themselves. Now, if a man had the spirit of Christ, he would rejoice in this. It would be the thing at which he would aim, to benefit the individual with whom he deals, as much as possible; and if he afterwards learns that he had made a good bargain, and had been greatly benefitted by it, it would gratify him all the more.

Now, how is it with you, my hearers? Do you find yourselves gratified and delighted, when you find that you have greatly contributed to the interest of those with whom you deal, in having given them the best side of the bargain? Be honest, try yourself by this rule; see whether you love your

neighbor as yourself; see whether you love God supremely. He requires you to seek not your own, but your neighbor's wealth. To look not upon your own interest, but the interest of others. Have you the spirit of these requirements? Have you the spirit and temper of that God who lays down this rule of action? If not, you have not the love of God in you?

- 5th. All those who will make bargains only when they can make a profit by it.

There are many who will never trade only when they can promote their own interest; it matters not how much it might benefit any body else. The interest of the individual, who desires to make the bargain with them, is not taken into the account at all. They do not think of making a bargain to benefit others, and will turn away from the proposal instantly, unless then can promote their own selfish ends. They will stand and bow, and be very accommodating, and kind, and attentive, while there is any prospect of their making a good per centage on their goods; but the negociation is broken off instantly, without courtesy or good breeding, whenever it is settled that they can make nothing by the bargain. This shows that they do not consult the interests of those with whom they deal, and that the world is their God.

- 6th. All those who will take advantage of the ignorance of those with whom they deal, to get a good bargain out of them, love the world supremely.

Cases of this kind often occur. A customer comes in; he is instantly measured from head to foot by every eye; they survey him all around, to see whether he understands the value of the articles which he wishes to purchase; whether it will be difficult, or otherwise, to get a good bargain out of him; whether it will do to set the price of goods high, and how high; and whether it is likely that he will buy much or little. And if he wishes to make a heavy bill, some of the first articles for which he inquires are put low; and thus baits are laid to lead him on, from step to step, under the idea that all the articles are low. All such management as this is supreme selfishness, it is fraud, and the very opposite of the spirit of Christ. For such a man to profess the love of God is naked hypocrisy.

- 7th. Those who will sell useless articles to men, for the sake of profit, have not the love of God in them.

A man that does this cannot be consulting the interest of his neighbor at all. He must be acting on principles of pure selfishness. He takes the money without an equivalent, and consents that they should "spend it for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not." This is the direct opposite of the spirit of Christ.

- 8th. All who sell hurtful articles, for the sake of the profit, have not the love of God in them.

The man that will sell articles of known pernicious tendency to his

fellow-men, for the sake of gain, has the very spirit of hell. Shall a man, who will sell rum, or make whiskey, and deal out death and damnation to men, and make them pay for it, and thus not only poison them to death, but worse than rob them of their money, shall he pretend to love God? For shame, thou hypocrite! thou wretch! thou enemy of God and man! thou wolf in the clothing of a sheep! Lay aside your mask, and write your name Satan on your sign-board.

There are those that will sell articles that are not only useless, but hurtful; inasmuch as they are designed to promote the pride and vanity of men, and to take their hearts from God, and fasten them upon the baubles and gew-gaws of this vain world. To tempt the deceitful hearts of men, and enlist them in the chase of fashion, and gaiety, and worldliness. Now, instead of being pious, they who do this take the devil's place, and tempt mankind to sin.

- 9th. All those who transact business upon principles of commercial justice, rather than on principles of benevolence, love the world supremely.

Business principles, or the principles of commercial justice, are the principles of supreme selfishness. They have been established by selfish men, for selfish purposes, without even the pretence of conformity to the law of love. Upon these principles it is neither demanded, nor expected, that any one should seek another's wealth; but that every one should take care of himself, purchase as low, and sell as high as he can; take advantage of the state of the market, the scarcity of the articles in which he deals; and, in short, to go the whole circle of selfish projects, to promote the interest of self. Can a man love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself, who daily and habitually transacts business upon the principles of commercial justice, founded, as they are, in that which is the direct opposite of the requirement of God? Every day engaged in business transactions, the sum and substance, the aggregate, and the detail of which are designed to promote self-interest that do not even pretend to aim at the promotion of the interest of others; but self is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole matter.

- 10th. All those who engage in business, to the neglect of spiritual exercises, love the world supremely.

Many professors of religion seem just about as much determined to do good with their money, as impenitent sinners are to repent. They profess to engage in business for the glory of God, but instead of using their money for this purpose, they enlarge their capital, and their business, and transact business upon the principles of worldly men, and practice upon themselves a constant delusion. Instead of laying out their money as they go along for the building up of the kingdom of Jesus Christ, they add their yearly profits to their capital, until nearly their whole time, and thoughts, and affections, are engrossed with money-making. Now, why do yo not see, who practice this, that you are deceiving yourselves?

The only way in which money can be used for the glory of God and the

good of men, is to promote the spirituality and holiness of men, and if you pursue business in a way that is inconsistent with your own spirituality, you might as well talk of getting drunk or swearing for the glory of God, as of making money for His glory. For you to neglect communion with God, under the pretence of making money for him, is sheer hypocrisy. If you prefer business to prayer, busy yourselves in you offices, and shops, and business, and neglect your closets, the love of God is not in you. To pretend that you love God is just as absurd as to suppose that your eagerness to make money for the glory of God, leads you to neglect communion with him, or that your great zeal to serve him, and great love for him, leads you to neglect communion with him, and betake yourself to making money.

- 11th. Those who make their business an excuse for not attending meetings and using means for the conversion of sinners. It is manifest that such persons are not transacting business for God. The only possible use of making money for the glory of God is, to use it for the conversion and sanctification of sinners. This is the great end of doing business for God. But to be so busy in making money, as to neglect to make direct and personal efforts for the conversion of sinners is absurd; it proves to a demonstration, that the object of making money is not to convert, and sanctify, and save sinners. In such cases, it is plain, that money is sought from the love of it, and not for the purpose of building up the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

- 12th. All those whose business diverts their thoughts and affections from God. If they were transacting business for God, the more busy and engaged they were in his service, in doing his will, and in making money for him, the more would he be present to all their thoughts, and the deeper and more mellow would be their piety.

- 13th. All rich men love the world supremely. Jesus Christ has said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Yes, you say, this is true, if he sets his heart upon his riches. Now, what I affirm is, that every rich man under the Gospel, does set his heart upon his riches. If he did not he would not be rich. If he loved the kingdom of God supremely, he would give his riches to promote that kingdom. We always do that which we, upon the whole, choose to do. If you have money, and see an article of furniture, or dress, or any thing else that, upon the whole, you prefer to any given amount of money, you are certain to make the exchange, and give your money for the article, if it is in your power. This is just as certain as it is that your choice governs your conduct. Now, if a man loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and the souls of men, more than he does his money; if, upon the whole, he prefers the glory of God, and the salvation of men, to his own selfish interest, it is as certain that he will cease to be rich, and give his money to promote those objects, as it is that his will controls his actions. So that a man being rich under the Gospel, when it is known that his money can be used for the glory of God and the conversion of souls, is demonstration absolute, that he loves the world supremely. To say that he is rich, but does not set his heart upon riches--that he continues to retain his wealth, and yet does not set his heart upon it, is manifestly absurd and false. For, certainly, nothing but a supreme attachment to it could cause him to hold on to the possession of it, when every wind is loaded down with cries and beseechings to send the bread of life to those that are ready to perish.

But, perhaps some will say that much depends upon the instructions that

rich people have received--that they may be conscientious in the belief that they may lawfully retain and enjoy their wealth. I answer that this does not relieve the difficulty, for the question is not, what they may lawfully do, but what they are disposed to do. Suppose an affectionate wife to have a husband in slavery, whom she tenderly loves; the price of his ransom is fixed, and she, by her earnings and savings, is determined to pay the price. See how she will behave herself. Of what use is it to tell her that she may lawfully purchase such articles of dress and convenience, and that it is lawful for her to have the comforts of life--will she so lay out her money? No: she will scarcely allow herself a pair of shoes. She will practice the most rigid economy, and take a satisfaction in denying herself every thing but the absolutely indispensibles of life, until she has made out the sum demanded for her husband's ransom. It is of no use to preach to her of the lawfulness of appropriating her money to other purposes. She has one all-absorbing object in view. She values money only as it will contribute to the promotion of this object. No false instruction, nor right instruction, in regard to the lawfulness of using her money for other purposes will alter her practice. Every penny that she can spare is laid out for the promotion of this object of her heart's desire. So if a man love God supremely, if he long for the coming and prosperity of his kingdom more than for any thing else, the question with him will not be whether he may lawfully enjoy an estate. The truth is, that could he do it never so lawfully, it is not his choice to do it. He prefers to build up the kingdom of Christ with his money, and accounts his money as of no value, only as it can contribute to this object. Therefore, I hold it to be a certain truth, that if a man is rich and continues to be rich under the Gospel, there can be no other reason than that he prefers wealth to the promotion of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Do any of you object and say, that Abraham, and Job, and David, and Solomon were rich? I answer: the command had never been given in their day to preach the Gospel to every creature, and there is no reason for believing that they so much as dreamed that the world could be converted in the way in which we now know that it can and must be converted. They could not, therefore, have had the same motives for using their wealth for the conversion of the world that we have. We have not the least reason to believe that their property could have been used for the conversion of the world, in the sense in which we can use ours. It was no certain sign, therefore, if they kept their wealth, that they prefered it to the kingdom and glory of God.

- 14. All those who lay up their surplus income, have not the love of God in them.

By surplus income, I mean that which is not necessary for the support of themselves and families; if they lay it up, it must be because they love it. If they prefered the kingdom of Jesus Christ, they would immediately use what they could spare, after providing for the necessities of their families, to the building up of his kingdom. Suppose an individual was on the coast of Africa, and longed exceedingly to return to his home, but had no means of paying his passage, if some one should present him with a purse of gold, would he lay it up, or would he immediately lay it out to gratify the all-absorbing desire of his heart and pay his passage to his native country. This would be the very reason why he would prize the gift. It would be valuable to him on that account, that by it he might accomplish the object

of his heart's desire. Can it be that a man loves supremely the kingdom of Christ, and longs exceedingly for its coming and extension, and yet hoards up his money instead of spending it for this supremely desirable object?

- 15th. Although a man may give his surplus income, yet if he practice no self-denial, he gives to God that which costs him nothing, and gives no substantial evidence that he loves God. If he gratify all his wants and the wants of his family, and provide for them all the comforts and conveniences of life, and simply appropriate what remains of his income over and above his expenditures, he really practices no self-denial; he enjoys all that can be enjoyed of wealth, and is really ridding himself of the trouble of taking care of it by appropriating the balance of his yearly income to the cause of Christ. This is like a safety-valve to let off the surplus steam that would otherwise burst the boiler.

Objection. But do any of you object and ask, should every man give up all his capital and means at once of promoting the cause of Christ? I answer, that this might not be Christian economy. A man's capital, if it be not larger than is necessary for the wisest transaction of business, is to be considered in light of tools with which he serves God and his generation. In such cases, if he give his income, after deducting the necessary expenses of his family, I cannot see that such a use of it is inconsistent with the love of God. But for a man to live and die rich, to hoard up his income, to enjoy his wealth, and leave his substance to his babes, is the Psalmist's definition of a wicked man who has his portion in this world.

- 16th. All those who are more interested in secular news, that relates to money transaction, than in the accounts of revivals of religion, and in those things that pertain more particularly to the kingdom of Christ, love the world supremely.

Show me a man that is looking over the secular news, after the price of stocks, and excited about bank questions and monied speculations, but who does not read or take an interest in reports of revivals, and the onward movements of the church, and if he profess to love God, his profession is base hypocrisy.

- 17th. All those who are more depressed, and feel more keenly commercial and monied embarrassments, than they do the low state of religion, and the state of dying sinners, love the world supremely. This is too plain to need either proof or illustration.

- 18th. All those who would sooner engage in monied speculations than they would in revivals of religion, love the world supremely.

Some professors of religion are all excitement when great speculations are to be made. When stocks are high, or real estate is on the rise, or any opportunity of making money. But if an effort is to be made to promote a revival of religion, they are too much engrossed in their speculations to give their time and hearts to it. They may pretend that they are making money for God, but the promotion of revivals of religion is the only object of appropriating money to the cause of Christ. If this be the great object of embarking in these speculations, to promote revivals of religion, and build up Christ's kingdom, it were passing strange if in the use of means they

should have no heart to engage in directly promoting the end at which they aim. The naked matter of fact is, that if they prefer monied speculations to revivals of religion, they love money, and love the world supremely.

- 19th. All those who disobey the commandments of God, for the purpose of making or saving money, love the world supremely.

A man who would travel on the Sabbath to secure a debt, or to avoid the expence of spending a Sabbath at a public house, when on a journey, certainly loves money supremely. Could he think, if he considered the property in his possession as belonging to God, that God would rather he would violate the holy Sabbath, than to lose a debt or spend a few shillings or dollars by stopping on the Sabbath?

- 20th. All those who do not feel more gratified with the appropriation of money to the cause of Christ, than with any other appropriation of it, love the world supremely.

Take again the case of the woman who is earning money to relieve her husband from bondage. What other appropriation can she make of money that would so much gratify her heart? It is this object that gives value to money in her estimation. Should an individual give her a purse of gold, would she say, now I can buy me a nice dress, now I can furnish my house and live fashionably? No, but bursting into tears of joy and gratitude, she would exclaim, Now I can redeem my husband! Just so a man, who loves God, and longs for the coming of his kingdom, will feel gratified, most of all, with appropriating money for the promotion of that darling object. Jesus Christ has said, that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." The truly benevolent man has the highest and holiest pleasure in so disposing of his possessions as in the highest manner to promote the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. Instead of giving to those objects grudgingly and with a sparing hand, here in the promotion of Christ's kingdom he will pour out of his treasures the most unsparingly, and with the fullest, readiest heart. For this his heart is panting. His spirit is longing with unutterable desires. He therefore accounts nothing a privation or a sacrifice which is appropriated to this object. Does the miser account the hoarding up of money a privation, a sacrifice, or a grievance? No, he accounts the hoarding up as the best possible disposition of his money. To every other object he gives sparingly, and takes but little satisfaction in any expenditures which he is obliged to make; but his heart is set upon accumulating treasures. Every shilling that is saved and put into his iron chest is disposed of according to his heart's desire. Now the Christian's heart is just as truly set upon building up the kingdom of Jesus Christ as a miser's heart is upon hoarding up his wealth. In other expenditures, therefore, he will naturally be sparing; but in the promotion of the great object of his heart's desire, he will be liberal and bountiful, and enjoy most of all the appropriation of money to that object.

- 21st. All those who prefer a speculation to a contribution for the promotion of the interests of Christ's kingdom, love the world supremely. If they loved God supremely, they would desire to make the speculation only for the purpose of enabling them to

make the contribution. If they made a hundred or a thousand dollars, they would say, "O for an opportunity now to appropriate this money to the cause of Christ." But if they love the speculation, and are not ready and joyful in the contribution, they love the world, and have not the love of God in them.

- 22d. All those who would rather see a customer come in to pay them money, than an agent of some benevolent society to receive and appropriate it to the promotion of Christ's kingdom, love the world supremely. There is a man who smiles and appears delighted when a customer comes in; but when an agent who is collecting funds for the building up of Christ's kingdom calls, he is sour, and dry, and formal, and perhaps uncivil. This demonstrates, beyond all doubt, where his heart is, and shows that he loves his money more than he loves his God.

- 23d. All those who do not really enjoy giving more than receiving, love the world supremely. If they loved God supremely, their supreme object and joy in receiving would be that they might immediately turn round and give to the promotion of their darling object. But if their incessant cry is give, give, wishing always to receive, and not enjoying the giving of money as they do the receiving of it, it must be because they love the world.

- 24th. All those who are more parsimonious in their expenditures for the kingdom of Christ, than in their expenditures upon themselves and their families, love the world supremely. There are multitudes of professedly pious people who seem to think it a Christian duty to have every thing connected with the worship and service of God of the cheapest kind, while in their own houses, and about their own persons, and that of their families, they practice upon a very different principle. If a church is to be fitted up, every thing must be done with as little expense as possible. If there are carpets, they must be of the cheapest kind; if there are stoves, or cushions, or lights, or other conveniences, almost any thing will answer, provided it is cheap; things are suffered to be out of order; filth is suffered to accumulate, and the house of God to lie waste; and all this is done under the pious pretence of Christian economy. Many churches in the country have no lamps, and some of them have no stoves, and others have the panes of glass broken out; the doors of others are so dilapidated that they will scarcely shut; others have the stoops rotten, and the church either not painted at all, or so faded, that if it was a dwelling house, you would suppose it the abode of the drunkard. Most of the churches in the country have no carpets; and in churches carpets are more needed than in any other house, to prevent the disturbance that always occurs where people are going out and in upon an uncarpeted floor; and in the city there are many who are entirely unwilling to be at the expense of fitting up a house of worship as commodiously as they fit up their own dwellings. Now, it is manifest, whatever may be the pretence, and however such things may be baptized by the name of Christian economy, all such conduct has its foundation in the love of the world, and in supreme selfishness. Men are always most free in appropriating their money to the promotion of the objects dearest to their hearts. This is simple matter of fact. If, therefore, the heart is set supremely upon honoring God with our substance, it is certain that if in any thing we are bountiful and liberal in our expenditures, it will be in fitting up places for his worship, and in all those things that are essential to decency, to comfort, and enjoyment in his service.

III. Having noticed some of the principal evidences of supreme attachment to the world, I now proceed to suggest several reasons why such persons cannot love God.

The text is a form of expression that is to be understood as expressing a very strong negative. "If any man love the world," says the apostle, "how dwelleth the love of God in him;" that is, the love of God is certainly not in him. This is the language and the doctrine of the whole Bible; so that, so far as Scripture testimony goes, the proof is conclusive. But I will mention several considerations that belong to the philosophy of mind, that will demonstrate beyond all contradiction, that individuals upon whom these marks of worldliness are found, have not the love of God in them. The argument runs thus, and is very brief.

- 1. It is impossible that a man should have two supreme objects of affection. If he have any acceptable love to God, it must be supreme; and to affirm that a man loves the world in the sense of this text, and that he loves God with any acceptable love, is a contradiction. It is the same as to say, that he loves both God and the world supremely.

- 2. A man cannot love two objects, that are entirely opposite to each other, at the same time. The apostle immediately subjoins to the text, "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but of the world." The love of the world, and the love of God, are directly opposite states of mind, so that to exercise them both at the same time is impossible.

- 3. It is minding the flesh which the apostle declares to be enmity against God.

- Lastly. It is supreme selfishness, which is the direct opposite of the love of God and man. These considerations need only to be named, to be seen to be proof conclusive, that if any man love the world, the love of God is not in him.

REMARKS.

1. You can see from this subject, that if men should transact worldly business upon the principles of the Gospel, it would be infinitely better for the world in every respect. If every one sought to promote the happiness and interest of others, the amount of property, and of every other good, would be greatly increased. Some persons seem to suppose, that unless they consult solely their own interest, it is impossible that society should exist. What! they say, would you have us all seek not our own interest, but the interest of others? What then would become of our own interest? I answer, your interest would be secured, if, while you were mainly solicitous to benefit others, they were just as solicitous to benefit you. The secular interests of men would be thus as highly, and more highly advanced, than under the present arrangement of society, while the spirit that would be cherished and cultivated by this course of conduct, would shed a sweet, and healing, and refreshing influence over all the discords and disquietudes of selfishness; and peace, and love, and heaven, would reign in the bosoms of men.

But does any one object and say, that inasmuch as worldly men will not practice upon these principles, it is impossible that Christians should, without giving up all the business of the world into their hands. This is a radical and ruinous mistake. Suppose it were known that Christians universally discarded all selfishness in their business, and acted upon principles of entire benevolence; that in all their dealings they sought the interest of those with whom they deal, equally with their own. No sooner would this fact be known, than worldly men would be forced to transact business upon these principles, or give up all the business of the world into the hands of Christians; for who would deal with a man who acted upon principles of supreme selfishness, when he might just as well transact business with those

who would not only treat him with equity, but with entire benevolence; so that it is perfectly within the power of the church to compel worldly men to transact business upon Gospel principles, or not transact it at all. And woe to the church, if she does not reverse and annihilate the whole system of doing business on principles of selfishness.

II. Perhaps some of you will say, if the doctrine of this sermon be true, who then can be saved? I answer, certainly not those who manage their affairs upon principles that are in direct opposition to the benevolence of the Gospel; who make commercial justice, which is founded in selfishness, the rule of their lives, and satisfy themselves with being honest in this sense of honesty, instead of being governed by the law of love; who seek their own, and not their neighbor's wealth; who mind earthly things, and account it more blessed to receive than to give. If there be any truth in the word of God, all such men are in the way to hell.

III. But will any one object, and say, this is very uncharitable. If this be true, nearly all the church are hypocrites. I answer, the doctrine is true, whatever the inference may be. I do not pretend to be more charitable than God is, and to hope that those persons are pious of whom God has said that his love is not in them. I will not be charitable enough to throw away my Bible, or suppose that the lovers of the world are the friends instead of the enemies of God. That multitudes of professors are deceived, that they love the world supremely, is as evident as if they had taken their oath of it; and because the great mass of professing Christians give evidence of this state of mind, we are not to dispute our Bibles, and charitably hope that they may be saved.

IV. You see from this subject why it is that so few professors of religion have a spirit of prayer. The truth is, the love of God is not in them. Look around this great commercial city; nearly the whole population are here for the purposes of worldly gain. The principles upon which almost the entire business of the city is transacted, is that of supreme selfishness. How then can a spirit of prayer prevail in such a community as this. This same principle prevails almost universally through the country. Farmers, mechanics, merchants, and men and women of every occupation, without hesitation, transact their business upon selfish principles, and seek supremely their own and not their neighbor's wealth. It is impossible that the love of God should prevail in the church, or in any heart, while actuated by such principles.

V. You see from this subject why it is that young converts so uniformly wax cold in religion. Let any individual pass through one business season, acting upon business principles, and it is impossible that the love of God should be alive in his heart. He is assiduously cultivating and cherishing a spirit of selfishness; and in all his daily avocations, he does not so much as intend to seek the good of others, but his own good; and can we be at a loss for the reasons of such universal backsliding?

VI. From this subject you may see that the religion of the great mass of the church is not the religion of love, but of fear. They fear the Lord, but serve their own gods. They are dragged along in the dry performance of what they call duty, by their consciences. They have a dry, legal, earthly spirit; and their pretended service is hypocrisy and utter wickedness.

VII. You can see from this subject why so little is effected by all the means that are used for the building up of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Men had much rather give their money than to live holy lives and walk with God. An effort seems to be making now to convert the world with money. Unbounded speculations are entered into by professedly pious men; and while their heart, and soul, and lives are absorbed in the spirit of this world, they are trying

to persuade themselves that their money will be a substitute for a holy life, and compensate for the neglect of personal exertions to save the souls of men; but, rely upon it, God will teach them their mistake.

VIII. The spontaneous conduct of the primitive church shows what true piety will do in leading men to renounce the world; and while the love of God pervaded the church, men were manifestly actuated by different principles from those of commercial justice. They sought not their own, but the things of Jesus Christ.

IX. But do you ask, are nearly all the church wrong? I answer, that upon this subject they are wrong. In most things the church of the present day is orthodox in theory, but vastly heretical in practice. Nor is it any thing new for the church to be nearly all wrong. More than once or twice have nearly the entire body of the church departed from God, and satisfied themselves with the religion of selfishness.

Lastly. I beg of you who are convicted of worldliness, not to go away and say that you hope that you love God, notwithstanding some, or nearly all of these evidences are against you. I declare to you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, that if these marks of worldliness are upon you, the love of God is not in you. And O, "be ye not deceived, God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; and he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

THE END.