

THE
SOUTHERN PREACHER :

A COLLECTION
OF
SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF SEVERAL EMINENT MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,
RESIDING IN THE SOUTHERN STATES.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS, WITH THE CONSENT AND
APPROBATION OF THEIR RESPECTIVE AUTHORS.

TOGETHER WITH

A FEW POSTHUMOUS SERMONS,

FROM THE
MANUSCRIPTS OF EMINENT DECEASED MINISTERS,
Who, when living, had resided in the Southern States.

CAREFULLY SELECTED FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS,
WITH THE CONSENT AND APPROBATION OF THOSE IN WHOSE POSSESSION THEY WERE
FOUND.

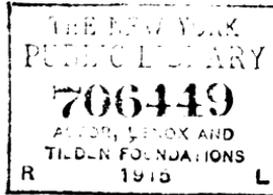
BY THE REV. COLIN M'IVER.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, } DISTRICT OF CAPE-FEAR,
NORTH CAROLINA DISTRICT. } *To wit :*

BE IT REMEMBERED, that, on the 7th day of March, in the forty-eighth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1823, the Rev. Colin M'Iver, of the said District, has deposited in this office, the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Proprietor, in the words following, viz :—

“The Southern Preacher: a collection of Sermons, from the Manuscripts of several eminent Ministers of the Gospel, residing in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of their respective authors. Together with a few Posthumous Sermons from the Manuscripts of eminent deceased Ministers, who, when living, had resided in the Southern States. Carefully selected from the Original Manuscripts, with the consent and approbation of those in whose possession they were found. By the Reverend Colin M'Iver.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned;” and also to an act entitled “An act, supplementary to an act, entitled an act, for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching. Historical and other prints.” Witness Carleton Walker, Clerk of the District of Cape-Fear.

CARLETON WALKER.

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SERMON XVII.

ON EARLY PIETY.

I. KINGS XVIII. 12.

“I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.”

TH**ES**E are the words of Obadiah to the prophet Elijah. During the tyranny of the cruel and persecuting Ahab, the Heavens were shut, that “it rained not on the earth “ by the space of three years and six months.” At the period of this long continued drought, and the consequent famine, the pious Obadiah is introduced to our notice. He was Ahab’s Steward; but even in this station, he maintained his fidelity to God, and his affection for his people. The name Obadiah, Signifies “The Servant of the “ Lord;” and this name is descriptive of his character.

When Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, “cut off the prophets “ of the Lord,” the decisive and intrepid Obadiah interposed, to wrest them from the withering grasp of this female monster. He “took a hundred prophets, and hid them “ by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.”

While famine was marking, with desolation, his progress through the dominions of Ahab, and leaving upon man and beast, the impression of his lean and withered hand; an incident occurred, which brought about an interview between Obadiah and Elijah. Ahab, pressed to the last extremity by famine, “said unto Obadiah, go into the land “ unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks; perad- “ venture we may find grass to save the horses and mules “ alive, that we lose not all the beasts.”

While they were exploring the country in different directions, the venerable and persecuted Elijah presents himself to the astonished Obadiah. From respect to the character of this man of God, Obadiah "fell on his face, " and said, Art thou that my Lord Elijah? And he answered him, I am : Go, tell thy Lord, behold Elijah is " here."

To the communication of this message, he objected, as rash and perilous. He could not believe, that the prophet intended to present himself, in the presence of the exasperated King. He knew that Ahab had spared no pains to find him ; that he had hunted through his own kingdom ; that he had explored, in search of this hated object, the dominions of surrounding monarchs ; and that Elijah had been hurried, from place to place, by the spirit of the Lord, that he might escape the fangs of this angry tiger. He supposed the prophet would again be directed to make his escape ; and his *own* life would be the forfeiture, if Ahab were disappointed, in the execution of the anticipated vengeance. "It shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not ; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me ;—but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth." This expression of Obadiah, is not to be considered as an ostentatious boast of his piety ; but was intended, merely, to assign a reason, why Elijah should treat him with cordiality and candour. "I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth."

It is very obvious to remark, that, by "*fearing the Lord*," as used in our text, we are not to understand, that *servile* dread of his character and presence, which is the source of disquiet to the unsanctified heart. There is a *filial* fear of God, which "is the beginning of wisdom ;" and which comprises the sum of true Religion.

It was upon this holy and vital principle, that the eye of Obadiah was fixed, when he said "I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth."

From these words, we shall consider, the importance of Early Piety. This becomes evident, from a variety of considerations.

First—That Early Piety is peculiarly important, appears, from the estimation in which it is held by God himself. His decisions cannot be *incorrect*. When God gives his opinion, this opinion is stamped with the seal of undeviating truth. Numerous are the testimonies which he has given, in favour of a consecration of our first days to him.

To the young, he has addressed the most plain and positive commands; and these commands, are clothed with the authority of God. "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth." "My son give me thine heart."

To these commands are superadded the most ample and extensive promises. "Those that seek me early, shall find me." To the youth who seeks for wisdom as for silver, and searches for her as for hid treasures, it is said, "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."

Knowing the aversion of the young to *holiness*, and their predilection for *iniquity*, the infinite God has followed these *commands* and *promises*, by the most affecting *entreaties*: "Come, ye children, hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." "Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, my Father, thou art the guide of my youth."

To these commands, promises, and entreaties, are subjoined the most faithful *warnings*. To the incorrigible youth, the volume of inspiration presents dreadful premonitions of the wrath to come. "Rejoice, O young

“man, in thy youth ; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth ; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes ;—*but know thou, that, for all these things, God will bring thee into Judgment.*”

He has done more than this. When commands, and promises, and entreaties, and premonitions, have failed, as they ever *must* fail, unattended by a *special* blessing, how often does he interpose, and impress them, with irresistible energy, upon the hearts of the young. In the execution of the plan of salvation, the providence and grace of God have borne the *strongest* attestation, in favour of Early Piety. In the recovery of a chosen seed, and in peopling the Heavenly mansions, *the dear youth* of our world have been the peculiar objects of divine compassion. *David*, the future king and psalmist of Israel, is the friend of God, while he tends his father's flock. *Samuel*, even when a little child, in the midst of a corrupt age, and a degenerate priesthood, is favoured with the messages of Heaven. When God addressed him, he could say, “Speak ; for thy servant heareth.” *Obadiah*, the pious steward of the reprobate Ahab, “*feared the Lord from his youth up.*” *King Josiah*, at sixteen years of age, was devoted to the cause of God ; and at *twenty*, we see him, with the intrepidity of a spiritual veteran, abolishing the high places,—cutting down the groves, consecrated to filthy deities,—dashing the vessels of their worship into shivers,—crumbling their images to the dust,—putting down the idolatrous priests, and burning their bones upon their altars. *Jeremiah*, was sanctified before he was born. *Daniel*, when a young man in captivity, is clad in spiritual armour, upon which all the weapons of a heathen court can make no impression. *John the baptist*, was filled with the Holy Ghost, from his birth ; and *Timothy*, “knew the Holy Scriptures, from a child.”

That God should *command* the young to attend to the concerns of Religion, is a direct evidence, that this subject is important in *his* estimation. When we see these commands followed by the most merciful *promises*, we have a more manifest exhibition of the divine feelings on this point. When we hear *entreaty* after *entreaty*, breathing the very accents of Heavenly compassion, directed to the young, we have another testimony to the value of *Early Piety*. This subject rises in our estimation, when we see the finger of Heaven, pointing to the pit; and hear the voice of Heaven, *warning* the impenitent youth, against the irrepealable maledictions of his God.

But our argument matures into demonstration, when God interposes, by his saving power; lays his hand upon the young; bows them to his sceptre; and moulds them into the Heavenly tempers of the Gospel. Here we have the highest attestation in favour of *Early Piety*.

In these acts, its importance is inscribed with the divine finger;—it is stamped with the seal of Heaven;—it bears the sanction of Jehovah.

Secondly—We argue the importance of Early Piety, from its natural fitness.

For an illustration of this point, we would appeal to the condition of youth, and the nature of the Christian system.

Youth is the period of *dependence*; and ought, consequently, to be the period of *piety*. Throughout the multifarious relations of the universe, wherever there is *dependence*, there is *obligation*. Our parents, who are the instruments of our existence, and who watch over our tender years, and direct our inexperienced steps, *deserve*, and generally *receive*, the expressions of filial gratitude. Bad as our world is, an unnatural child wears the brand of infamy, from one end of the earth to the other. These impressions originate in the very princi-

ples of human nature ; and when these obligations are not felt and performed, there is a violent severance of the bonds which unite man to his fellow man. And these principles are equally true, of the relations of man to God ; and emphatically so, with respect to the young. " A son honoureth his father"—" If then *I be a Father,* " where is mine honour ? saith the Lord of Hosts."

Gratitude, and *ingratitude*, to a benefactor, are viewed in much the same light as *obedience* and *disobedience* to a parent. Let the youth of this assembly consider the great God, for a moment, in the character of a benefactor. Your very existence is from him ; his power and providence shielded your infancy, and watched around your cradles. Your rational faculties which distinguish you from the brutes, and assimilate you to the angels, are his gift. Your opportunities of mutual cultivation, are the product of his sovereign goodness. You might have been doomed to intellectual night. But you are now so situated, that you may become acquainted with the surface of the globe you inhabit ; number the stars which decorate the Heavens ; learn many curious and useful things, respecting the external and internal structure of bodies ; and investigate the laws by which the material universe is bound together, directed, and sustained.

But your superlative blessing is the Gospel of Christ. Were it not for this, the grossest moral darkness would have covered you. Your God would have been a dumb idol ; and your own parents might have given you, in sacrifice to devils. For these temporal and spiritual favours, it is fit, in the very nature of things, that you make some returns. While you live regardless of these obligations, you may, with propriety, be addressed in the language of the prophet—" Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O " earth ;—for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished

“and brought up children; and they have rebelled
“against me.”

But the *natural fitness* of early piety will more strikingly appear, if we consider the character of the Christian system. The mantle of piety, and the ornaments of grace, confer the most charming and amiable attractions upon the young. The young man, who is a friend of the Lord Jesus Christ, however he may be *secretly hated*, or *openly ridiculed*, by the wicked, possesses a true dignity of character, which irresistibly commands a tacit veneration, even from the sons of impiety. The religion of Christ imparts to man a new attribute, by which he enforces a kind of homage, even in the most degenerate times, and from the basest of characters. Were we to draw the moral portrait of a young man whom an angel might look upon and love, we would copy the features exhibited by Saul of Tarsus, after his memorable journey to Damascus. We would inspire his zeal;—impart his decision of character;—excite his generous sacrifices for Christ; and superadd his unparalleled intrepidity, as a messenger of the Cross. The brows of such an one shall be entwined with never-withering wreaths, compared with which, the laurels that a Cæsar reaps, are weeds. Were we to delineate the character of a young female, encircled with all the loveliness which can attend this state of imperfection, we would present her, pressing with her right hand, the Bible to her heart;—her eye lifted to the throne of God;—and her countenance illuminated, by a ray of hope from Heaven. Or, in an attitude not less impressive, we would exhibit her, like Mary of old, prostrate at the feet of Jesus Christ, washing them with her tears, and wiping them with the hairs of her head.

Thirdly—The person who embraces religion when young, has more ground of hope than others.

The religion of the Gospel is a system of self-denial. There can be no real dependence on Christ, till every other dependence fails. There can be no hope in him,—till other hopes are sacrificed and overwhelmed in despair. We shall never cast the sure and steadfast anchor within the vail, till *all others* are torn away by the storm.

The more we relinquish for *the Gospel*, the greater may be our confidence in its promises. It is a fundamental law in the Kingdom of Christ, that “he that will lose his life shall save it.” Those who forsake *all* for Christ are, in this world, the heirs of every *necessary inheritance*, and, “*in the world to come*,” of “*life everlasting*.”

To the eye of an inexperienced youth, the world is covered with the mantle of deception. Its groans, and disappointments, sighs, and tears, have no existence in his estimation. All is full of enchantment. The music of Paradise is heard in every grove;—the breath of health perfumes every breeze;—riches and honours, and pleasures, attend on every step; and *happiness* in full and flowing attire, dances in every region of the globe. These fancied scenes establish a dominion over the minds of youth. The deception reaches, and penetrates, and poisons the heart. It exerts a control over every principle of action. The pleasures of the world are magnified beyond limits; and its groans of despair, and knells of death, are unheard or annihilated. To an unconverted youth, the world is *every thing*. It is his Heaven;—it is his eternity;—it is his God! The story of the young man who came to Christ for instruction, inspires a peculiar interest. What was said of him is true of every youth; “He went away sorrowful; for he was very rich.” The young are rich *in prospect*. The fallacious promises of the world, are their treasures; and though they may be worth nothing in actual possession; yet, in anticipation, they are *rich*; rich in deceptive prospects;

rich in lying prophecies of good ; rich in dreams of unsubstantial bliss.

With these impressions, if the young are willing to sacrifice *the world* for the *Gospel*, what solid ground of hope ! The youth who places himself under the direction of Christ, when the heart is warm, the affections ardent, and the world enchanting, may emphatically adopt the supplication of the Psalmist ; “ Cast me not off in the “ time of my old age ; forsake me not when my strength “ faileth.”

Fourthly—The Christian youth may calculate on extensive usefulness.

Throughout the universe, *material* and *immaterial*, there is a wonderful relation and dependence. The sun and planets, mutually attract and are attracted. The needle vibrates to the pole, and the lead gravitates to the centre. The rays of the sun exhale vapours from the earth, and these again descend, in showers of rain, to water and fertilize our fields. So accurately is the material system balanced, and such is *the action* and *the reaction* of one body upon another, that it has been conjectured by some Philosophers, that the annihilation of *one* particle of matter, would destroy the harmony of the whole ; and reduce the visible universe, to a state of anarchy.

In *the moral* system, relation and dependence, are not less obvious and important. Every rational being, from the seraph to the savage,—from Gabriel to the Hottentot,—has his post assigned him. To trace minutely the relations and dependencies of the human family, would be unnecessary and superfluous. Suffice it to say, that every man is related to his fellow man ;—and he is made not for *himself* but for *a world*. The foundation of extensive usefulness, must be laid, in early life. Correct and legitimate principles of action must be interwoven with the very structure of our minds ; and associated

with the earliest affections of our hearts. A sacred impulse must be given to the years of childhood; or we have no security against a fatal desertion of that orbit which God has assigned us.

In all the relations of life, we are bold to assert, *that the Christian* is, of all characters, the most *useful*. This assertion, we challenge infidelity itself to deny. Who can discharge the duties of husband, and wife, so well as those who bear each other's burdens, "and so fulfil "the law of Christ"? What parents so useful as those who train up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"? What sons and daughters are the instruments of so much *happiness*, not only to their *friends*, but to the *world*, as those who are consecrated to the fear of God? Who can be so useful in any of the relations of life, as the real Christian? The Gospel which he presses to his heart, furnishes him with the best practical principles. He has imbibed the spirit of the Heavens. His bosom has been inspired with every Christian grace, at the foot of the Cross. To a life of active and condescending usefulness, he feels himself constrained by the example of him who "went about "doing good," and who, with his own hands, washed his disciples' feet.

In whatever sphere this man is destined to act, he must be useful. Every thing on which he lays his hand, feels a *new* impulse; and his touch, like the imaginary stone of the Alchemist, converts all things into gold. Such a character, whether he be the inmate of a palace, or the tenant of a cottage—whether he hold a sceptre, or follow a plough, will leave the world better than he found it.

Far be it from our intention to assert, that no character but the Christian is useful to the world. We depreciate the labours of *no man*;—we draw no veil over merit; we tear from no brow the laurels of renown. The Gene-

ral in the field, and the Statesman in the cabinet, and the Citizen in the more quiet walks of life, who have served their country with fidelity, receive our veneration and respect. But in all these stations, *the friend* of the Gospel is more useful than *its enemy*. The principles of Christ furnish a person with various and endless resources of usefulness to his fellow men, of which he who is under the influence of mere worldly motives, is entirely destitute.

But we all have a common interest in eternity. To this great inheritance we are born. This is one of the first sentiments to be inscribed on the youthful mind. A preparation for this state is necessary; and, in this business, we may be beneficial to one another. Meager indeed is *that charity* which crawls upon the earth; and contracted indeed is that *beneficence* which is circumscribed in its operations, by the boundaries of time. The Christian looks beyond the present scene. While he rejoices in the *temporal* interest of man,—his great and superlative object is to pluck *immortals* from *Hell* and plant them in *Heaven*. And, for this course of conduct, he has reasons which are bottomed on eternal truth.

But a few days—and the present scene is changed. The social relations are broken up; political systems vanish; and human governments are dissolved. Legislation is at an end; wars cease; the bow of the victor is broken; the spear of death is cut asunder; and the chariot of conquest is burned in the fire. The volume of human speculation, and of human science, is forever closed. The student no longer trims the midnight lamp; and “the star surveying *sage*,” no more “*applies the sight-invigorating tube*.” The accumulated masses of *wealth*, which have been heaped together, by the exertions of laborious days, and sleepless nights, are melted down to dross. The miser no more eyes his shining

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dust, nor weighs his bags of gold. The brightest and most dazzling *honours* are covered with the broad stains of pollution and contempt. No more does the man in whose bosom ambition has kindled the fires of Hell, wade through seas of blood, to conquest and a crown. *Sensual gratifications* expire; and plant the sting of scorpions in the heart. Man can brutalize himself no more. The earth itself, shakes and crumbles into atoms. *The skies* are veiled in sackcloth;—*the sun* is extinguished;—the moon is converted into blood;—the stars of the firmament, as useless cobwebs, are brushed away;—the Heavens are rolled together as a scroll;—the car of desolation is driven over the prostrate ruins of a disjointed world;—and the great fabric of nature sinks, in one wide-spread and universal conflagration!

What, of human effort, now remains? Dear youth, not a trace, not a vestige can be found, except that which has been directed to the joys of immortality. In the affair of salvation, we all have something to do; something for *ourselves*, and something for *others*. He that lives without engaging in this work, lives without an adequate object; and the world is not made poor by his death. "TEKEL" may be inscribed upon his coffin; and "*Here lies creation's cypher*"—may be the epitaph upon his tombstone. The name of *such an one* shall perish; and over his memory shall be thrown the mantle of eternal night.

Fifthly—THE SAFETY of the Christian youth is another argument in favour of early piety.

The present state is a mere pilgrimage; and not our final home. The road to the grave, whether it terminate in happiness or misery, is a road skirted with dangers, and planted with thorns. He who would take the amount of human afflictions, might at the same time number the sands upon the margin of the ocean,—give

names to the orbs of infinity,—or enumerate the atoms which compose the solid globe we inhabit. The history of man is the history of *temptations*, of *sufferings*, and of *death*. To these, youth are peculiarly exposed; and against these, the religion of the Gospel can alone defend them.

The Christian youth *is safe against temptation*. The world is full of snares. In this age of *hardihood* and *impiety*, what, but the grace of God, can save our youth from being swept away, by the overwhelming torrent of *infidelity* and *vice*? What, but the influence of the Gospel, can be our security, against the Sabbath-breaking, the profane swearing, the blasphemy, the profligacy, the intemperance, the gambling, and debauchery, which, in every direction, meet the eye, and assail the ear, and shock the heart! Take away the restraints of the Christian religion, and you leave our sons and daughters liable to become curses to their parents, and the scourges of the world. You abandon them, the victims of every temptation, and the prey of every vice!

The Christian youth has an antidote against *the sufferings of life*. Sin has transformed the earth into the abode of tears. The cup of affliction passes from one hand to another; and, to the impenitent sinner, it is indeed the cup of consternation,—sometimes of despair. How little do youth consider the pangs which will, by and by, rend their bosoms! These hearts, gay and sportive as they now are, must be transpierced with many sorrows! Should you live a few years, you will witness the ravages of *death* around you. A young companion shall fall at your side;—you will stand by the death-bed of a brother, or a sister;—the affectionate son, with a trembling step, and an agonized bosom, will follow his father to the grave; the distracted daughter shall wipe the cold sweat of death from the cheek of her expiring mother;—and

many who now experience all the expressions of parental care, will be enrolled on the register of orphans! In these scenes, dear youth, who will support you? Can you, with safety, lean on any arm, except the omnipotent arm of Jesus Christ? Sustained by him, you may walk upon the waters of tribulation, unhurt and undismayed, while the storms roll, and the waves dash at your feet.

But there is one scene, still more affecting than these. Every youth is exposed to the shafts of death;—and Oh! how often do we behold the young and gay, pale and prostrate victims at his feet! Perhaps some of the youth of this assembly, are destined to an early grave. A few steps more may bring some of you to your bed of death, and your eternal home. And what, Oh! what can defend you, against that destroying angel, who is emphatically styled the “King of terrors”? Nothing—on the authority of eternal truth, I assure you, nothing but “the whole armour of God.” Clad in this Heavenly panoply, you shall conquer when you die; and from your expiring lips, shall issue the songs of triumph.

Sixthly—We argue the importance of Early Piety, from the peril of an irreligious youth.

We have already seen, that dangers beset and threaten on every side. Before the irreligious youth, there is much tribulation, and no support. If he loses friends, he buries them in anguish; and the tears which he sheds over their remains, are the tears of despair. Are the parents of such a child snatched away? He cannot say, with David, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.”

When diseases prey upon the body, and threaten to disjoint and prostrate this tenement of clay, the heart of the distracted youth has no principle of patience, resignation, or support.

But the superlative peril to which the irreligious youth

is exposed, is an *early death*. The graves of the young, crowd the burying places of the dead. A vast majority of our race never reach the days of manhood; and with this majority, some blooming youth in this assembly may be doomed to lie! The consideration, that this may be the lot of *any*, ought to carry terror and conviction to the hearts of *all*. The blow of death is a *decisive* blow. It is succeeded by the *bliss*, or *vengeance*, of eternity. And should you be hurried to the tribunal of God, in an impenitent state, to which you are every moment liable, the seal of immutability is then affixed to your doom! But who can depict the anguish, of perishing under the light of truth; of exchanging the instructions of the sanctuary, for the wailings of the pit; and of plunging into *Hell*, from the very gate of *Heaven*?

But, suppose your expectations of life are answered: still, the ordinary progress of an irreligious youth, is indeed affecting. Your very *life* is full of peril. You tread on enchanted ground; you feed on poison; and breathe the air of pestilence.

Follow, with me, the footsteps of a young man without religion; and tell me, if you can calmly contemplate *this picture*, as exhibiting the lineaments of your own character? When a child, and instructed by his parents or others, he possesses a tenderness of conscience, and a sensibility of heart. He *feels* the truth. He trembles when he sees a grave opened, or dreams of death. He is overwhelmed with conscious guilt, when his sins are presented to his eye; he weeps when he sees the Son of God, "bathed in his own blood," and hung upon the tree; his features brighten when he hears, that this Jesus has conquered death, and plucked away his sting, and "scourged the venom out;" and he turns pale, when the faithful finger, points to the worm that never dies, and to the flame that is never quenched. He resolves, in the

sanctuary, to seek the mercy of God. He goes home ; reads his bible ; and prays. But, alas ! after all these promising appearances, the impression is soon effaced. As he grows older, he becomes more insensible, till some alarming providence, or some affecting truth, again arrests his attention. His remorse is now pungent ; and his convictions strong. But, alas ! his proud heart will not bow. A young companion frowns, or smiles, or sneers, and a puny insect inspires more dread, than the Omnipotent God. Freed from the restraints of conscience, and the impressions of truth, he runs, with madness, in the road to death. He now associates with the profane ; and, although the first oath that passes his lips may alarm him ; yet he soon becomes familiar with the whole dialect of impiety. He can follow the *footsteps*, and imitate *the example* of the sons of vice. His progress through life, is from one degree of guilt to another ; till the once promising young man, becomes an old and hardened enemy of God. The thunders of Almighty and vindictive wrath have rolled, till their reverberations have died upon his ear ; he has fixed his eye upon the agonies of the Son of God so long, that the *stones may weep*, but he *cannot* ; the throb of holy joy may thrill through the bosom of every Saint in Heaven, and every Saint on earth ; and this sacred pulse may beat to the very extremities of the spiritual universe ; but *his* polluted blood, is chilled and stiffened in his veins ; *his* heart is harder than the nether millstone, and colder than mountains of ice ! The glories of Heaven may tune the harp of every angel, and swell the anthem of every redeemed sinner ; but, in *his* bosom, every string is broken ; and every note is discord !

Of the future prospects of this character, we need not speak. We may say, in the emphatic language of Jesus Christ, "It had been good for that man, if he had not "been born."

Nor is the progress of an *irreligious female*, less instructive to her sex. Naturally dependent, unprotected, and timid, she often feels, when young, the necessity of a refuge "from the windy storm and tempest." When she thinks of death, her frame trembles; and her heart palpitates with fear. How often does she read the story of Jesus Christ, and bathe the sacred page with her tears!

But alas! her impressions are like the "morning cloud" and "the early dew." Young companions smile; and the world prevails. Dress and amusement, and vanity, characterize her life; till her dreams are disturbed by the *footsteps* of death. She turns pale when the messenger knocks at the door,—reads his commission,—and lays his hand upon her heart. The closing scene is too often a scene of horror; and all beyond that curtain, is despair.

It is obvious to remark, that the sentiments advanced in this discourse, are by no means restricted, in their application, to the young. Many of our observations address themselves, with additional and peculiar force, to those who have outlived the days of youth, and are yet crowding the downward road to ruin. To this dying congregation, including the impenitent of different ages, we may now say, your duty, and your interest are before you. But may we not tremble, when we calculate the possible, and perhaps the probable consequences of this Sermon? With the joys of Heaven to invite you home, and the flames of the pit to drive you from the fearful brink, is it not to be apprehended that you will go away and forget what you have heard, and suffer the noise of the world to drown, "the still small voice," of the Spirit of God? Relieve me from this impression; bear away this anxiety; and you lift a mountain from my bosom. I retire from this temple of worship, with a joy which words were too feeble to express.

And now, I would affectionately and emphatically inquire, *what answer shall I return to him that sent me?* Shall I tell your God, that another message is rejected? Shall the book of Heaven, when its leaves are unfolded, testify, that not a youth—not a sinner of any age, in this assembly, would bow to Christ and live? Remember, oh! remember, that the heralds of the Gospel, who now address you, will not address you long! The hand which is now extended to lead you to Christ, will, ere long, be enwrapped in a shroud. The eye which now fixes with affectionate interest, upon so many youthful immortals, will be sightless in its socket; and the tongue which now pleads the cause of your salvation, will be chained in the silence of the tomb! But, to the unrelenting sinner, whether young or old, God will send *another* preacher. I see him already on his way. He rides upon a pale horse—and his name is DEATH! *His* message you SHALL hear; *his* preaching you MUST feel!