

THE LIVING PULPIT,

OR

EIGHTEEN SERMONS

BY EMINENT LIVING DIVINES

OF

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

WITH

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE EDITOR,

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EDITED AND PUBLISHED

BY REV. ELIJAH WILSON.

ELEVENTH EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS,

S. W. CORNER OF SEVENTH AND CHERRY STS.

1861.

PERPETUITY OF THE CHURCH.

BY

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Wherefore we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.—HEB. xii. 28.

WHAT kingdom is this which *cannot* be moved? What kingdom is that which *has not been moved*, and shall not be for ever? Where is the law of absolute permanency manifested? Where are the everlasting foundations that never shall be shaken? Shall we turn to the kingdom of nature for an example, expecting to find unchangeableness there? Upon a careful examination, a state of facts will be discerned at war with the commonly received opinions of the permanency and fixedness of the course of nature. If we go back a few centuries in our investigations, we find that extraordinary interruptions and changes have marked the history of this kingdom, since God created the heavens and the earth, the proofs of which are graven in the rocks by the finger of the great Architect; the memorials of which

are as numerous as the heights of the earth, and the depths of the sea. Our globe has been shaken by convulsions, which have overwhelmed existing orders of life; which have thrust the mountains skyward, and hollowed out the profound depths where are gathered the waters of the ocean. The chaotic state which preceded the present order of things, when the earth was without form and void, has left every where visible and indubitable marks of its existence. The ancient forms of life have passed away, and new ones have been created to supply their places. The economy of existence, in this world, has been changed more than once; and the present order of things reposes on the wrecks of pre-existent and extinguished forms of life. The ruins of primitive forests, of a diverse order or species from those which now exist, constitute the beds of coal from which we draw inexhaustible supplies of fuel. The metals we use were melted in furnaces in the interior of the earth, and injected in veins through the masses of igneous rocks, broken by a power which shattered the crust of the globe, and upheaved the mountains, whose scattered debris constitute the soils which now produce the precious fruits of the earth. The attrition and decomposition of substances forced out of the bosom of the planet, and distributed by the alternate action of cold and heat, by the agency of fire, air, and water, constitutes the basis of all vegetable production, and the support of the present kingdom of life. The roots of the present economy draw their sustenance from the graves of its predecessors. We build not only *upon*, but *with* the tombs of extinct orders of

life; more than this, the regularity and uniformity of the present order of things is the result of a previous designed irregularity and disorder, which prepared the globe for the support of its present inhabitants. Mountains and valleys are the ridges of ancient volcanoes, which drove the plowshare of apparent ruin through the crust of the earth, only to prepare the way for man, and the orders of life with which it pleased God to surround him. The ancient vegetable kingdom was buried as a deposit for his use; before this, in the era of fire which preceded all forms of life, the metals were fabricated, and then deposited, or rather driven, near the surface by volcanic action, for the same wise and benevolent purpose. All the primitive systems have passed away, having performed their office by furnishing the means of support to that which was to succeed them.

The scriptural chronology commences with the creation of man, after a brief intimation of a pre-existing amorphous condition of the earth; and it is conceded that geological phenomena do not indicate a longer time than six thousand years for the present order or kingdom of life. The Bible no where limits the length of that period during which the planet was in an imperfect and forming condition; nor are we told how long the Spirit of God was moving upon the face of the waters, preparatory to the last six day's work of creation. But without dwelling further on this interesting theme, may we not presume that enough has been said to show that the kingdom of nature has none of the permanency spoken of in the text? It has been revolutionized;

it has been shifted from foundation to foundation ; it has been moved from its earlier conditions ; it has been without all life under the dominion of fire ; it was inhabited for a time only by the inferior forms of existence, which sport in the waters, or by gigantic lizards, which haunted the marshes among ferns sixty feet high ; it has experienced numerous interruptions destructive of the earlier organisms, which have been succeeded by new *acts* and new *forms* of creation.

The present economy under which we live is continued now by no necessity of nature, and abides in an orderly way, only because God “upholdeth all things” by the same word of power by which he called order and form, and life and light, out of darkness and death, out of emptiness and nothingness. It is the sure word of promise that perpetuates the kingdom of nature during the appointed time, for God said to Noah, when he came out of the ark, “While the earth remaineth summer and winter, seed time and harvest, cold and heat, and day and night shall not cease.”

But as this kingdom of nature has been moved by the concurrent testimony of science and religion, so there is the same evidence that it is destined to new revolutions and changes. The promise to Noah implies the end of the present economy ; “while the earth remaineth,” that is, during the appointed period of its present state, “seed time and harvest shall not fail.”

The apostle Peter, in his second epistle, declares that “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements melt with fervent heat ; the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be

burned." He announces that "all these things shall be dissolved;" "nevertheless," continues the apostle, "we, according to his promise, look for a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." It appears to be the meaning of the inspired writer, that the present economy, its order, its laws, its atmosphere, its forms of matter, and life shall be dissolved; not annihilated, but reduced by fire to the same rudiments out of which God before educed the first creations. "We look," he says, "for a new heavens and a new earth," implying, we think, a *new* and *higher* organism, to be fashioned out of the old materials, because he adds, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." How strikingly analagous is this declaration of the final consummation of the divine plan, in the new heavens and the new earth, with the physical history of the planet, at first a globe of fire, upon which was superinduced, at length, an inferior economy of life, followed by new kingdoms, advancing in importance, increasing in beauty and glory, until man appears made in the image of God. But this condition, impaired by the apostacy and defaced by sin, must give way at length to a "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." That the globe has once been a mass of fire, proves that it may again become so; and as God has superinduced new and more perfect creations upon the destruction of the older organisms, have we not here a confirmation of the divine word, which promises a new heavens and a new earth at last, perfect in righteousness—an immovable kingdom?

But there is proof in the present arrangement of our globe, that the kingdom of life that now subsists

upon it must be dissolved. Is it not manifest that our economy is to wax old, and at last vanish away, or be changed into what the apostle calls a new heavens and a new earth? Consider, for a moment, what renders the world habitable. Are not the mountains and the valleys of our planet, its rivers and seas, essential to the healthy condition of its atmosphere, no less than to the productiveness of its soil, and its eligibility, in numerous respects, as an abode of man, and the circle of life of which he is the head? Now, it is philosophically and strictly true, that a time must come, however remote the period, when the earth, by the operation of known laws, will cease to be a suitable habitation for our race. The newly cut and sharply defined caverns of the ocean, made by the convulsions which preceded the existing economy, are slowly filling up, and must in time cease to fulfill their office. A single river, like the Ganges or the Mississippi, would, in a period which can be ascertained and stated in figures, discharge a continent into the sea. Every mountain on the globe, by an observable process, must in time be precipitated, until at last a dreary and stagnant level, exposed to the incursions of the sea, would characterise all its continents and islands. The earth grows old, like a decaying edifice, and by the operation of known physical causes must at length become uninhabitable—a worn out and broken dwelling, requiring the return of another chaos, a new fracture of its flattened crust, new convulsions destructive of all life, to heave up new mountains and hollow out fresh cavities, and then a new creation to people the new world. So then the kingdom of nature is not the

kingdom spoken of in the text, which cannot be moved, for this kingdom has been moved, and shall again be; which is taught also by these words of the apostle in the context, "whose voice then shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, yet *once more* I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; and the words *once more* signifieth the *removing* of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain; wherefore we, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear."

The apostle here contrasts the visible things of the Hebrew economy, and with them all temporal and material forms which are to be shaken, with a kingdom which, he informs us, cannot be moved.

Where, then, are we to look for this kingdom? Is it among the kingdoms of the world? Let history answer; let us listen to the voices from the sepulchres of empires; let us mark the wrecks of kingdoms that lie scattered on the shores of time. Where are the first, and perhaps the grandest of monarchies among men, of the days of the giants of old, men of renown, who filled the earth with violence? Where are the antediluvian kingdoms, to which the first sixteen centuries gave birth, when men lived a thousand years, and had time to perfect their knowledge, to complete their plans, to make durable their monuments, and, if it were possible with temporal things, to lay immovable foundations? They are utterly finished, their memorials have perished from among men; all record of them is lost, save only the brief narration in Genesis of their guilt and their

doom. The last great catastrophe in nature was ordained for their judgment, for God saw that the earth was filled with violence, and that all flesh had corrupted his way, and opened the windows of heaven, and broke up the foundations of the great deep, and swept away the debased populations who had filled the earth with blood and the heavens with indignation. The sea roars over the broken monuments of the antediluvian kingdoms which perished beneath its waves. Over the chasm of forty centuries the wail of the primitive generations comes echoing upon our ears like the noise of many waters. "He uttered his voice, the kingdoms were moved, the earth trembled; thou coverest with the deep as with a garment; the waters rose above the mountains, at thy rebuke they fled, at the voice of thy thunder they hasted away."

Was there no kingdom that survived that general doom? Mark you yon vessel upon that wild waste of waters, that fathomless and shoreless sea, the sport of storms that sweep from the equator to the poles? Keeps she, amid the terrors of the deluge, such a charge? Bears she a kingdom there, preserved out of the universal destruction, and which shall never be moved? If so, no wave shall break her bulwarks; no yawning grave of billows shall enclose her priceless freight. Who sails with her shall come to land, though naught but a howling sea, and a leaden sky are now visible; though every element of destruction rage around her battered hull, like roaring lions, greedy for their prey.

Where is that post diluvian kingdom, whose seat of power was in the plain of Shinar, through which flows

the ancient river Euphrates, once bearing upon its bosom the commerce of nations, the wealth of the world? Where is that capitol city that styled herself the Lady of Nations, the Queen of Kingdoms, to whom a hundred and twenty provinces, comprehending all languages and tongues, sent tribute, and before whom, as to a divinity, they rendered homage? Where is that gorgeous Babylon, whose golden towers shone ever in that cloudless climate, reflecting the sun by day, and the stars by night? Where is that glory of the Chaldean's excellency, whose circuit, for a swift rider, was the journey of a day; upon whose walls, higher than the commemoration columns of modern times, three chariots could drive abreast, fearless of the dizzy height, and sheer descent on either hand? Alas! there is no response. Babylon gives no sign, though the neighbouring Nineveh is rendering up her sculptured forms, her glorious specimens of art, concealed for centuries, to the curious eyes of a generation, wise in its own conceit, but who from the Assyrian tombs might learn humility, if this were possible. But no man knows the precise site of Babylon; the Euphrates, which treacherously admitted Cyrus within its walls, spreads out her channel to conceal her crime, enwrapping in one dark morass the first and most magnificent of all the capitals of the world; and thus the royal word of prophecy, uttered before the glory of Chaldea had begun to diminish, is fulfilled; "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldean's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; it shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation;

neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there; but wild beasts of the desert shall be there. And their houses shall be full of doleful creatures, and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there. And the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces, and her time is near to come, and her days shall not be prolonged." The kingdom was removed from Babylon with a destruction like that which overtook the cities of the plain, where the sluggish waters of the Dead Sea mark the place and the manner of the divine judgment. The site of the one is a noxious marsh, of the other a putrid sea, whose barren shores are watered by no dews from heaven. The wild Arab, himself the child of prophecy, avoids both as spots accursed of God, and pitches his tent neither by the sea of death, nor the marsh of the Euphrates, filled with doleful creatures.

What kingdoms of this world have not been moved, what political foundations have not been destroyed? The fate of Babylon and Rome, the *first and last* of the universal monarchies is the history of all the empires and kingdoms of this world. It is true a shrunken spectre yet haunts the banks of the Tiber with "the horns of a lamb but the voice of a dragon," claiming ghostly dominion over men, pretending to be the head of a kingdom that shall not be moved, exalting himself to the throne of God, nay, above all that is called God or worshipped, wearing upon his triple crown the words of blasphemy, changing times and laws, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; but

he is a king of death among the dead, a ghoul amid the tombs, a galvanized corpse mimicking life in a sepulchre, a starving vampire amid the skeletons of nations, a throned shadow aping the old despotism that once set its heel upon kings. The scarlet mantled harlot of prophecy, drunk with the blood of saints, sits still upon the seven hills, with the prophetic name upon her forehead, seen in vision by the apostle John, "Mystery, Babylon the great;" but her strength is broken, the shuddering nations will no more drink from the golden cup of her abominations; she waits the day of her predicted doom. Rome is a city of dead men's bones, a tomb of giants haunted by pigmies. The kingdom spoken of in the text *is not there*; the spiritual tyranny that is enthroned in the place of God in the western church had its beginning and will have its end; it is an antichristian usurpation, whose days are numbered by the sure word of prophecy; the Pontiffs are destined to the same doom as the Cæsars. The fate of the empire will overtake the remorseless despotism which has ever imitated the splendour of Pagan Rome, and fashioned itself after the model of its government, and baptised its heathenish ritual with Christian names; which has travestied the example of the Lycaonians, who called Paul Jupiter and Barnabas Mercurius, by worshipping Jupiter under the name of Peter, and the demi-gods under the appellation of saints.

The souls of the martyrs, whose blood the Papacy has shed for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, does still cry out from under the altar, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true dost thou not

judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell in the earth?" and voices in heaven and earth respond, "Their judgment now of a long time lingereth not."

Where is the kingdom among men that has not been moved, from the golden head seen in Daniel's vision of the four great monarchies, to the feet of iron and clay? Have they not all been broken without hand and perished for ever? Are not the solemn words "passing away" engraven on all the monuments of modern civilization, on all the glory of the existing nations? What flaming portents of change and revolution come flashing across the Atlantic, visible in the new world; what rumors of oppression, usurpation and war are wafted on the winds; what wailing of the down trodden populations of Europe sweeps sighing over the ocean! Have they not found, from an exile on our own shores, a voice of surpassing eloquence, penetrating all hearts, filling all eyes with tears of compassion and sympathy? Like the restless waves the kingdoms of our own day are moved; they stagger to and fro like drunken men; they heave like the earth, which treasures in its bosom the fires of the volcano; as Samson, bound to the pillars of Dagon's house, shook its foundations in his death agony, so the populations of the world are writhing in their chains and shaking the ecclesiastical and political despotisms which crush them. Those scenes which were witnessed a few years since in Europe seem about to be repeated;

When Death was riding grimly forth with Terror by his side,
And blood stained war and pestilence, and famine hollow eyed.

And while the kingdoms of the old world are moved, is there no danger for us? Shall we pre-

sume upon our precocious infancy, upon our gigantic and vigorous youth, in our wide territory and rapidly advancing population, in our free institutions and glorious union of States? Is there not danger that we may forget our exposedness to this universal law of change? Have not clouds already arisen upon our horizon, which, though no bigger than a man's hand, have threatened the dissolution of the Republic, and darkened the hopes of political and religious liberty over the world? Have we not seen enough to teach us the mutability of national greatness, and to lead us to implore the Founder and Ruler of nations to preserve that which he has established, to save us from evil counsels, from ruinous divisions, that we may not perish as a people in our childhood, but may at least pass through the period ordinarily allotted to great empires, and that we may not madly hasten and anticipate that decline and decay which sooner or later fall upon the most fortunate kingdoms of this world?

But you have already anticipated the direct answer to the question, "where is this law of permanence? where is the unchangeable foundation of which the apostle speaks in the text? You know it is the kingdom of God, the church purchased by the blood of Christ, the people assured to him in the counsels of the eternal Trinity, and by the covenant of redemption. But a question still remains. Where is the attribute of permanency manifested? In what does this unchangeableness consist? There are various aspects under which the kingdom of Christ may be considered. In which does the declaration of the apostle find its verification? Let us briefly reply.

In order intelligibly to decide this inquiry, we must look for those things in the kingdom of Christ which exhibit the *unity* of the church ; which have been the same in all generations, and which must continue the same to the end.

It will not be denied, by any called Christians, that this immovable kingdom has existed from the beginning; that the Church was founded in the family of Adam, and had its fundamental doctrine in the word which God uttered in the ears of our apostate progenitors, as they were driven forth from Eden, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" that it had its first sacrament in the lamb offered by Abel as an expiation, symbolising the lamb of God slain in the divine purpose before the foundation of the world. What the external order of worship was in the antediluvian church we know not, but it is obvious that the apostle, in the text, has no reference to this, because he is contrasting the visibilities of the Hebrew economy, which were now passing away with that in the Church, which is ever unchangeable. "And this word," says the apostle, "signifieth the remaining of those that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain, wherefore we, receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and with godly fear." As though he had said that which is external and visible in the Hebrew economy is shaken, and will pass away with all temporal things; what is immovable and unchangeable in the kingdom of God and of Christ, we receive in the dispen-

sation of the Gospel, which is committed to us. The external order of the Church has ever partaken of the same law of change which we observe in the kingdoms of this world. There have been various dispensations, various external successions, and diverse forms of government in the kingdom of Christ. The Church has worshipped under different forms and administrations; she has had priesthoods and rituals, and she has been without them; she has had sacred localities to which her service has been confined, and where it has been prescribed. "Our fathers," said the woman of Samaria, "worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father." The Hebrew was shut up to the hill of Zion; the tribes went up to worship God at the sacred temple; there was the holy of holies; there was the Shekinah, the visible glory of the invisible king; there only could the sacrifice of the law be offered. Of that locality the Holy Ghost had uttered these words, "His foundation is the holy mountain; the Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob; glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God; all my springs are in thee." But the true succession, the unchangeable priesthood, the one sacrifice that perfecteth for ever, was not in the temple service which passed away, because it was but a shadow of the substantial things in that kingdom that cannot be moved. The same faith that had been symbolised in the temple for centuries, pre-

served, as in a fortified city, by the Hebrew, to whom was committed the oracles of God, embalmed in his economy, defended like some forms of life in nature in the chrysalis state, until the appointed day of their enlargement, when they can spread their wings safely in the sun. The faith of Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, was now proclaimed in every valley and on every mountain. Christ crucified was set forth in every habitation, from the palace of Nero at Rome, to the hut of the savage Scythian in the northern wilderness. "The Church of God, which is in thy house," was the language of the apostles in their epistles to the brethren; the congregation of believers assembled for worship in dens and caves of the earth; the sacred symbols, of the most holy passion of our Lord, were exhibited in fields and forests, or wherever else the Christian minister and his flock could escape from the observation of their persecutors. The ensigns of the kingdom that cannot be moved went out from the temple and the ritual of the Hebrews, to be given to the breeze in every island, and continent, and sea.

Nor is ecclesiastical order in the house of God the element of permanency spoken of in the text. There can be no doubt of its value and importance in its place, but it is very certain that no visible priesthood, no one form of church government, no unbroken succession of ordinations or ordinances have constituted or manifested the unchangeableness of that kingdom that cannot be moved. There are many administrations, though but one Lord. The Church is represented by the apostle as having an unchangeable priesthood only in Christ, who abideth

for ever; the *doctrines* of the Cross and not *the forms in which they are exhibited* remain, through successive dispensations, and survive them all, the same with the divine Authors "yesterday, to-day and for ever."

There is an analogy in civil governments which are ordained of God, in which we perceive a diversity of administrations, or rather a diversity of forms under which they may be and are administered. We have a right to our opinion as to which of these is preferable, but it is no where contended that government can have no valid existence except in a particular mode. We think the Scriptures clearly make the validity of statutes, and the recognition of the authority of the magistrate to consist, not in the *form* but in the *fact* of government, and this is agreeable to the principles of international law. States do not refuse to recognise each other because their governments are administered under different forms; it is only a condition of anarchy which is out of the pale of all national fellowship. "The powers that be," says the apostle, "are ordained of God," that is, *existing* powers or administrations, under whatever *diversities* they appear; the fact and not the form of government is that which is divinely ordained, and hence the former is universal and unchangeable, according to the purpose and will of the supreme Governor, while in respect to the latter there is no law of permanency, but rather one of change, accommodated to the wants, the progress and circumstances of particular nations, ages and races. Is there any evidence that a different principle prevails for the government of the church, or

that God has prescribed an infallible order of external rituals, without which all faith and all penitence are vain? Has the Most High bound his Church to any thing more than the fact of government, upon the general principles found in the New Testament, since the day that the shadows of the Hebrew economy gave place to the light and liberty of the gospel dispensation? While we endeavour to approximate as nearly as possible to what appears to us to have been the order of the apostles and the primitive Church, have we a right to refuse *to all others* the Christian name; to say with the Jews, "The temple of the Lord are we," or to exclude from the pale of the visible kingdom of God and from our Christian charity, those who cast out devils in the name of Christ, though they follow not with us? That charity has its boundaries we freely concede, but we do not believe that they are to be found in mere questions of church order, for these are not the immutable foundations of the kingdom of Christ. Wherever the fundamental doctrines of the gospel are denied, there is no basis for fellowship, and to form one in such a case is betraying the Master into the hands of his enemies. "If there come any to you," says the apostle John, "and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; he that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God; he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son, and whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father." The doctrines of the divinity, incarnation and sacrifice of Christ, of

the divinity and office of the Holy Spirit, and his work of conviction, regeneration and sanctification, of salvation by grace without the deeds of the law and of eternal judgment, are fundamental in the gospel scheme, and if rejected compel us to refuse fellowship with those who deny them.

That is a true Church which maintains what has been common in all the dispensations of the kingdom of Christ—the doctrine of redemption by the sacrifice of the Son of God, and the symbol or sacrament of it as found in all the economies of the Church. The first revelation of the truth was in the garden; its symbol or sacrament, which is the visible sign and expression of it, was in the sacrifices common to all the dispensations of the Church until the coming of Christ, when the Lord's supper took its place, pointing back to the cross, or to a perfected work, as the former had prefigured it before its consummation. Upon this view that congregation of worshippers who profess the common doctrine, and exhibit the common sacrament, which has been maintained in the kingdom of God in all ages, dispensations and changes, is a true Church of Christ, and to be recognised as such by all believers, whatever external differences of order, ritual or government may distinguish them.

But there is another aspect in which this subject may be presented, another sense in which the immutability, and, consequently, the real visibility and unity of the church may be apprehended. The kingdom of grace, as established in the soul of every believer, called according to the purpose of God, is one that is *immovable*; and that this is principally in-

tended in the text, may be argued from the form of the expression, "we receiving a kingdom that cannot be moved," for we *come* to what is *external* and *ritual* in the church; we *receive* what is *renewing* and *sanctifying*; we *come* by a public profession to the city of the living God; we *receive* by divine grace "the kingdom of heaven within us."

The kingdom of grace is that principle of holiness which is imparted to, and sustained in, the soul by the Holy Ghost. It is practically manifest and visible to men in a cordial reception of divine truth, and in practical obedience to the commandments. It is known by its unity of faith and character in all ages and dispensations. Here is the abiding unity of the Church from the family of Adam to the present day, and to the existing company of believers, by whatever name called; here is the "holy generation, the royal priesthood, the peculiar people," whose succession is visible not merely from the apostles, and for the last two thousand years, but for sixty centuries, and from Abel and Enoch, from Noah and Abraham. As the book of Genesis and the gospel of Mathew, as the revelation of Job and that of John, contain the same doctrine, so there is a succession of men, from the apostacy to the present time, receiving the same faith, practising the same godliness, and exhibiting the same sacrament. Here is the remnant after the election of grace, here the *true Israel*, for what is real and fundamental in Christian experience is real and fundamental in the visibility of the Church, and constitutes that TRUE UNITY which binds together all true believers from the beginning to the end of the world.

But, more particularly, let us inquire why this kingdom of grace cannot be moved.

1. Because it is a spiritual kingdom set up in the soul itself, which does not partake of the changeable character of temporal foundations. "The things that are seen are temporal," even in the Church of God; but the things which are unseen are eternal. The visible and external dispensations of the Church have each in turn been shaken and moved, and shall be; its rituals and ordinances, its government and sacraments, have their appointed day, and must at last disappear, when time is swallowed up in eternity, and death in victory; but the kingdom of grace, set up in the soul, abides for ever. The heavens shall pass away, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, all visible things and forms shall wax old, and, as worn out vestures, shall be folded up, but this kingdom, like its Author, shall not fail, and of its years there shall be no end.

This kingdom shall not be moved for another reason. It originated in the purpose of God, and is maintained by his power. It can never die out of the world, because the Father hath given a seed to the Son in all generations; because, in the covenant of redemption, the heathen are promised to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. The Church for this has survived all changes, outlived all persecutions, and, with immortal youth, walks among the graves of false philosophies, of decayed superstitions, purifying the polluted atmosphere, and pointing the heirs of sin and death to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, eternal in the heavens. So, in the soul, if the

kingdom of grace be set up, it cannot be moved; for it is the Spirit that quickeneth, it is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who ever liveth to make intercession for us, so that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This kingdom cannot be moved because it is that on account of which all others exist. God perpetuates the race, and ordains governments and exercises a universal providence over the evil and the good, for the reason that he has a people which he will take out of all nations and races. For this the wicked live, because in their generations are numbered the elect; for this empires are founded, and flourish and fall; for this the tares and the wheat grow together till the harvest; for this "the heathen are permitted to rage and the people to imagine a vain thing," until the day when all nations shall hear the voice of him that sitteth in the heavens, saying, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, and I will give him the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." All temporal kingdoms are but scaffolding for the building of God; all revolutions tend to accomplish his designs. Wars break down the barriers which prevent the progress of the gospel; migrations for gold are caravans to carry the Bible and the missionary of the Cross to the dark places of the earth. *God and the Church are the explanation of history*, without which it is a dark unreadable enigma.

This kingdom of grace is immovable, because its author and head, its prophet, priest and king, is divine, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. The eternity and immutability of his nature attaches itself to the church purchased by his blood; because he lives and reigns, his people shall live and reign with him. The two natures of the God-man mediator may be said to symbolise the two aspects under which his church may be viewed; in one we see the weakness and changeableness of finite things, in the external order of his visible kingdom, in its exposedness to corruptness, declensions and heresies; in its various dispensations and changing rituals; in the other, we see the law of absolute permanency in the one faith and the one sacrament preserved in all generations. So in the individual Christian, the weakness of a finite nature and its remaining corruptions are ever in noticeable contrast with the power of that divine life in the souls of believers, which is the working of the Holy Spirit, who is able to keep them from falling, as the Son in his own righteousness is able to present them faultless and spotless before the presence of the Father with exceeding joy.

Finally, do you inquire how can a congregation of professed worshippers know that they belong to this immovable kingdom; how can the individual satisfy himself whether he be of the household of faith to whom pertain the promises? The answer is easy; upon the principles we have suggested, the congregation have only to ascertain whether they have the faith and the sacrament that has characterised the true Church in all her dispensations; for

this they must search the Scriptures, and seek to know the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in them, the only infallible guide to truth and judge of controversies.

There is no view of the subject which can furnish so solid a ground of satisfaction to the individual as the one we have suggested. Whether he has received this kingdom, is upon the basis presented, a matter of consciousness; it is not a matter of investigation, of endless genealogies, full of difficulties which perplex even the learned, but a question of fact in the believer's personal experience. Is the kingdom of God within him? Is the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost? Are the fruits of the Spirit manifested in his life? Are the truths of the gospel dear to him? Does he cleave to Christ and his imputed righteousness as the sole ground of his justification? Are the doctrines which exalt God and stain the pride of human glory precious to his soul? Has he some foretaste of heaven in the religious emotions, the gratitude and praise that are kindred in his bosom? Has he received the same spiritual baptism with holy men of old, and does he find the revelation of his own conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, in the inspired record of their trials and their experience? Is not here the only reasonable and satisfactory assurance of eternal life? Is not all else of the nature of formalism or rationalism vague, uncertain and unsatisfactory? I speak to wise men, judge ye!