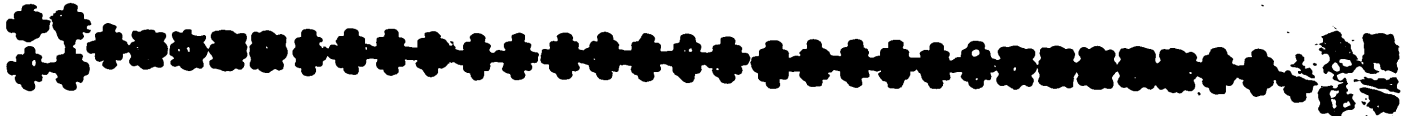


Mr. Morison's

S E R M O N.



A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED JUNE 28, 1797,

AT THE

I N S T A L M E N T

OF THE

REVEREND JOHN BODDILY,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE 2^d PRESBYTERIAN SOCIETY IN

NEWBURYPORT.

BY *WILLIAM MORISON*, V. D. M.

PASTOR OF A PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN LONDONDERRY.

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1798.

A S E R M O N.

REVELATIONS xiv. 6.

And I saw another angel, fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

MY FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

WITH this book, God closes the canon of inspiration. In it, he gives us a summary of excellent instructions, suited to the various state of the church ; with a prophetic discovery of many great events hid in the womb of futurity ; and which were to come to pass in their appointed seasons, to the end of the world. Like many other books of inspiration, the name of this, is expressive of its contents. It is called Revelation ; and the Revelation of Jesus Christ. And this Revelation, God gave to him to be communicated no doubt to his servants in general ; and which Christ sent by the spiritual instrumentality of an angel, in particular unto his servant John.

That John the evangelist was the penman of this book, is obvious from comparing the 2d verse of the 1st chapter of it, to the testimony which he bore of Christ, in his evangelical writings.

In the first chapter of this sacred book, we have an elegant introduction to his epistolary communications to the
seven

seven churches of Asia ; with benedictions to the faithful readers and hearers of the epistles and prophecies ; and the whole interspersed with a beautiful description of the person and character of the Redeemer, with a cluster of the blessings the redeemed enjoy ; and an account of the penman's name, situation and sufferings, at the very time when he wrote it, by the spirit of inspiration.

He wrote the epistles to the seven churches, at the command of the Great Alpha and Omega, the first and the last ; and described his character under various forms, with a majesty and sublimity far superior to the excellence of human eloquence. The second and third chapters contain these epistles ; and we find the candor of the writer, equally obvious, with his faithfulness ; in commending the churches for those things wherein they were right, and reproving them wherein they were wrong ;—and enforcing every epistle with something of the excellent character he had given of Christ, in his preparatory introduction.

After these epistolary communications to the churches are finished, we find the penman proceeding in the fourth and fifth chapters, to the prophetic part of his revelation.

In this we find him favored with a vision of God, as seated upon a throne, celebrated by ministers and saints, together with a vision of Christ, as the lion of the tribe of Juda, the root and offspring of David, and as such able to open and explain the seven sealed book of God's alwise decrees, to the universal joy of saints and angels, whether in heaven or on earth.

In the sixth chapter Christ is opening six seals. In this it is supposed we have a description of the various state of the church and Roman empire, from Christ's ascension, to the time of Constantine, about the year 323, when Paganism was in a great measure rooted out of the empire.

During this time, many of the Emperors were cruel persecutors, and the church suffered ten different persecutions. As these afflictions were great, there still remained more calamities and trials in reserve for the church, under the opening of the seventh seal, in the eighth chapter ;—such as hail, and fire mingled with blood, and a
burning

burning mountain cast into the sea, darkness smiting the sun, moon and stars ; and a three fold wo denounced against the inhabitants of the earth. We find the safety of God's children held up to view in the seventh chapter, under the emblem of beneficent angels, holding the four winds of the earth, that they should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree, and expressly commanded not to hurt them, until the servants of God should be sealed, as we suppose, with a seal of preservation, from any final injury. Thus the seventh chapter looks back by way of comfort to the church, with respect to the distresses she had already undergone ; and forward to support and comfort her against the afflictions and calamities she had yet to endure. This is usual in the providence of God ! The present life is a checkered state of being, for the church prosperity is interspersed with adversity, light with darkness, joy with sorrow, and pleasure with pain. It is in this light we find the discoveries of inspiration in this book throughout ; and especially in the preceding chapter, and in that where our text is recorded. In the former we have a discovery of the rise and fury of Antichrist under the similitude of a beast rising up out of the sea, swift and subtle as a leopard, cruel as a bear, fierce and rapacious as a lion. But in that where our text is, John got a view of Christ under the emblem of a lamb, standing upon Mount Zion, with his church and people ; and the care he takes of them in the time of danger, with ample manifestations of their joy in consequence. And he represents them, as harping with their harps, and singing a new song before the throne, which no man can learn, but the redeemed from among men on the earth ; being the first fruits unto God, and the Lamb, and in whose mouth is no guile.

To this happy end he got a discovery of a preached gospel, in the vision contained in the words of our text, And I saw another angel, fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth ; and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.

It is generally agreed, that the sight which John saw of
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an angel, is an emblematical representation of gospel ministers.

The flight of the angel in the midst of heaven, may be very expressive of the willing activity and diligence of gospel ministers, in the church for their work. Their having the everlasting gospel to preach, intimates their being acquainted with its nature and properties ; and their being clothed with proper authority to preach it to the information of others. In the words we have also, the objects, and extent of their commission, as gospel preachers ; them that dwell on the earth, neither saints departed into heaven, nor souls sunk into despair in hell. From this we may infer that as saints in heaven, have no need of the administration of gospel ordinances, departed spirits in despair, having despised the gospel in time, shall not enjoy it in eternity ; but are justly consigned over to woe without remedy.

The extent of a gospel minister's commission is, every nation, kindred, tongue, and people dwelling upon the earth ; or as Christ says, every creature under heaven.

From the words thus opened, I shall take the liberty of shewing the propriety of the similitude, under which gospel ministers are represented in the text, as angels, and then illustrate a little the nature and properties of the gospel, as the everlasting gospel ; and shew how it is to be preached ; after which I shall speak of the objects, and extent of a minister's commission, as expressed in the words, them that dwell on the earth ; every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. I am,

1st. To shew the propriety of the similitude under which gospel ministers are represented in the text. The evangelist John saw an angel, a minister or messenger fly in the midst of heaven. As I trust we have no sadducees, denying the existence of angels and spirits, in this assembly, I shall not digress to say any thing more to confute such, than that reason affords a strong presumption for the existence of angels ; and scripture renders the truth of it unquestionable. The ministers of the seven churches of Asia, were denominated angels ; and to them, under that character, the epistles of inspiration were directed.

Ministers

Ministers are compared to angels, from the spiritual nature of their office ; for as angels are spiritual beings so ministers are called spiritual instructors. They have to deal with the souls or spirits of men, and in all their concerns for, and with the souls of men, they are to consider themselves accountable to the Supreme Spirit, who is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth, in the service of the gospel.

Angels are continually *near* God, serving him day and night ; and *before* him, as more intimately acquainted with him than other beings in general. So ministers should live near God in prayer and meditation, and be instant in season, and out of season, serving God as the apostle says, with the spirit in the gospel ; and acquainting themselves, more and more with God ; the mysteries of his word, the operations of his spirit, the designs of his providence, and with the efficacy of his grace.

The propriety of the metaphor under which ministers are represented in the text, will appear from the very meaning of the word angel, signifying the same as messenger. Christ the prime minister of the New Testament, is called the messenger, or the angel of the covenant ; and as such he was sent into the world on an embassy of salvation. Agreeably to this, his ministers may be called messengers and are expressly called ambassadors. We as ambassadors for Christ, pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. As angels are sent by the authority of God, to execute his commands on earth ; so are ministers of the gospel. Hence they are said to be sent forth ;—Behold, I send you forth, as sheep among wolves ; be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. When Isaiah the prophet was called to this spiritual employment, an enquiry is made by the Spirit in the following words : Whom shall I send, and who will go for us ? To this, the willing prophet replied, here am I, send me.

To these observations we may yet add, that ministers are not only denominated messengers, and sent in that character as angels often are ; but are likewise sent upon the same important business. They are co-workers with angels, for

the children of men. A cherub, or angel was sent to minister unto Isaiah the prophet; an angel was sent to minister unto Daniel as a prophet greatly beloved, and angels ministered unto Jacob ascending and descending, on a visionary ladder; therefore he concluded the place was the house of God, and the gate of heaven. When the apostle Paul was speaking of angels in the most honorable style; he called them ministering spirits; sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation. And we are also informed, that angels ministered unto Christ, and proclaimed the good news, and glad tidings of salvation unto the shepherds, at Christ's birth. What is this, but a summary representation of the employment of gospel ministers? Their business is to wait upon Christ; and to minister unto the heirs of salvation, and to gather in the elect of God from the four winds of the earth. And it is to this purpose our text represents them as flying angels, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth. But this leads us

2d. To illustrate the nature and properties of the gospel, as the everlasting gospel, and to shew how it is to be preached. The word gospel is sometimes understood in a large sense, as signifying the whole of the Bible. But sometimes it is used, as meaning only the new Testament, in distinction from the old, as more legal in its administrations. Thus it is said the law came, by Moses; but grace and truth, by Jesus Christ. Sometimes the word gospel is expressive of the four evangelist's history, of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, as distinct from the other parts of the new Testament. But by the gospel in a strict, and proper sense, we are to understand the exhibition of the covenant of grace, as an absolutely free, and gracious dispensation of mercy, and salvation to men on earth, both under the old, and new Testament; and in this respect it is to be understood, in its true and genuine meaning, as good news and glad tidings.

Agreeable to this, the angels proclaimed the birth of Christ, as an essential dispensation of the gospel to mankind. Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which

which shall be to all people. That the exhibition of the covenant of grace is the gospel, good news or glad tidings will appear, when we consider, what the gospel proclaims from this covenant to mankind. The blessings proclaimed are comprehended in the promises of that covenant, for the salvation of men from sin and hell. Hence the gospel proclaims pardon to the guilty ; I, even I, am he, that blot-teth out thine iniquities, and will not remember thy sins any more. The prophet Zachariah gives us a lively representation of this truth. As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water. Tell a condemned criminal of crowns, and kingdoms without pardon, he is still disconsolate. Inform him of a sovereign dispensation, in the administration of which, his chains are to be loosed, his prison doors unlocked, a pardon put into his hand, and that he shall enjoy the privileges of a free citizen ; and his heart will leap for joy. The proclamation which God made of himself to Moses, is pregnant with the good news and glad tidings of the gospel ; when he passed by him and said ; I am the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.

The gospel as an exhibition of the covenant of grace, contains sanctification for the morally polluted, and peace for the conscience ; and such joy to the disconsolate, that the world cannot give nor take away. The Prophet Isaiah beautifully describes the nature of the gospel, in the following words : The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted ; to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion ; to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. It is under the administrations of the gospel, that the eyes of the blind are opened, the ears of the deaf are unstopped, and that the lame man leaps as an hart ; the tongue of the dumb sings, and waters break out in the wilderness,

wilderness, and streams in the desert. It is by the gospel that the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall blossom as the rose. To the soul sensible of its danger of perishing for ever, and realizing the excellency of the gospel ; it is as rest to the weary, bread to the hungry, drink for the thirsty, cloathing to the naked, wealth to the poor, and mercy to the miserable. To this purpose are the following passages of inspiration. " Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. I counsel thee to buy of me, gold tried in the fire that thou mayst be rich ; & white raiment that thou mayst be cloathed, that the shame of your nakedness may not appear." The gospel enriches the soul with durable riches and righteousness. All things are given to the believer in the gospel ; Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas, and life, and death, things present and things to come. God himself is made over in the gospel as the portion of the soul. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore I will hope in him. I will be your God is a fundamental promise of the new covenant, and is comprehensive of all the blessings of grace and glory.

God makes himself over to his people in this promise, in all that he is, personally considered, as their Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

There is a sense in which God makes himself over to his people in Christ, in all his attributes and perfections, whether communicable or incommunicable. The eternity of God is the date of the believers happiness ; his immensity the bounds of his inheritance, and the immutability of Jehovah, the rock of his rest. The wisdom of God is his direction, the power of God his protection ; his holiness will sanctify him, his justice will acquit him, his goodness reward him ; and his faithfulness secure him in the accomplishment of all the promises of salvation. These, and many other great and precious promises are but even a part of the good news and glad tidings contained in the gospel. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.

It is an additional ground of joy and gladness that this gospel is everlasting. This is a quality by which it is denominated in the text. The word everlasting is variously understood in scripture ; sometimes it signifies from eternity, and sometimes to eternity, and sometimes both. Thus, God is said to be from everlasting to everlasting. We find also it denotes a thing to be very ancient, or to endure for a long time to come. Thus the hills are called everlasting hills ;—thus the land of Canaan was given for an everlasting possession. The gospel is everlasting in all these respects. It is from eternity, and to eternity as to its author. I was set up from everlasting, says Christ under the character of wisdom, in Prov. 8th chapter. When there were no depths I was brought forth ; when there were no fountains abounding with water, when he prepared the heavens I was there.——Then I was by him as one brought up with him, rejoicing always before him—daily his delight—rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.

The gospel is everlasting in its decrees and purposes—Hence, when the great Apostle's heart heaves with gratitude to God for blessing us with all the spiritual blessings of the gospel ; he adds, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world ; being predestinated unto the adoption of children—and having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself : that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one, all things in Christ ; both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in him, in whom we have an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things, after the counsel of his own will.

Nor are the testimonies of God's eternal decrees respecting the gospel, peculiar to the New Testament only. The Prophet Jeremiah informs us of God's eternal and everlasting purpose of grace. Behold I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.

In point of antiquity, the gospel is coeval with the creation of the world, in the appointment of a sabbath of rest ; and in the promulgation of the promise, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head :—when in consequence of man's first apostacy, all man kind, lay dead in trespasses and sins. It is no less than a miracle, and standing evidence of the everlasting nature of the gospel, that it has been preserved from age to age to the present day ;—hell and earth, and in a sense, men and devils have conspired for its destruction. The gospel has come down to us, swimming on seas of blood, engaged in scenes of actions ; and advancing through tempests of fire for our salvation. The fate of its glorious author while on earth, and of the members of his mystical body, bear a strong resemblance to each other. And as the author of the gospel destroyed principalities and powers, and obtained a glorious victory in his resurrection from the dead ; it is a sure prelude, that the gospel cannot be subdued in his followers ; but that it shall live and flourish far and wide, and reign to the end of the world.

It may be noticed that the righteousness manifested in the gospel, is an everlasting righteousness. It is expressly denominated so by Daniel the Prophet. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.

It can hardly be doubted, that these words have a direct respect to, and their fulfilment in Christ, whose everlasting righteousness, is the only and meritorious ground of our justification before God in the gospel.

The efficacy of divine grace, in the hearts of gospel subjects, and the subjects themselves, are everlasting. Of the former it is said, that the incorruptible seed of the word, liveth and abideth for ever :—and of the latter, we are informed that their life is grafted on his life in that promise, because I live, ye shall live also. When God puts his law into their hearts, and writes it in their minds,
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it is done in such an effectual manner, that no vicissitude in time, at death, or in eternity, shall ever obliterate. In the gospel, Christ gives eternal life to his people ; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand. The habit of grace in the hearts of believers, is like good seed sown in good ground. The longer it is there, the deeper it roots, and higher it grows in lively exercise, until it arrives at the beauty of a palm-tree in the paradise of God. In the everlasting efficacy of the gospel, the prophet's vision shall be fully accomplished ; when a palm-tree and a cherub, or saints and angels shall ornament the temple of the Lord, even the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Lastly, The glory and praise the gospel brings to God, is everlasting. Hence the four and twenty Elders which are before the throne, cast their crowns to the ground saying, thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, and honor, and power. In another place it is said, every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and such as are in the sea, I heard saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb, for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty Elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever. I now take the liberty of showing how this gospel is to be preached. I hope I may be indulged this freedom upon such an occasion, without being suspected of arrogating a full competency to the importance of the subject ; or of throwing any new light upon it to my Reverend Brethren. Permit me only to be thought, to stir up pure minds by way of remembrance. Two ideas may comprehend all I mean to say on this point, viz. The matter and manner of preaching.

First, the matter of a minister's sermons is to be attended to. This should be the truth ; and the truth as it is in Christ. Christ crucified is to be the great theme of our sermons : He is to be preached in the glorious constitution of his person, as God man Emanuel ; in the excellency of his offices, as our prophet, priest, and king—and in
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the fulness and freeness of his grace. We are to preach Christ in his incarnation and birth ; as the great mystery of godliness ; God manifested in the flesh. We are to preach Christ in his life as our example, in his death as our atonement, in his resurrection as our hope, and in his ascension to heaven as our forerunner and advocate. We are to hold up his doctrine as the rule of our faith, his law as the rule of our manners ; & him in his endearing characters & relations as our Saviour, and the only way unto the Father. If we preach from Moses and the Prophets, we should preach Christ, for they witnessed of him. If we speak from the ceremonial law, it adumbrated the Redeemer. If we hold up the moral law, we are to infer the necessity of a Saviour. If we speak from a catalogue of names, it should be to confirm our faith in the lineal descent of our Saviour, as of the family of David. In short, the sermon that is not connected with Christ, or his doctrines, laws, precepts, promises, spirit or salvation, is not of the everlasting gospel, nor likely to feed immortal souls with the bread of life, that came down from heaven, that giveth life unto the world.

The *manner* of preaching the gospel, should claim much of our attention. And we may observe the gospel should be preached fully. The apostle could witness he shunned the declaration of no part of the counsel of God. Such a minister is a blessing to those who have him : and the contrary character a heavy judgment. In preaching in this faithful manner, the truth will find out the real characters of men and administer according to the various necessities of the hearers, and be most likely to do them good.

Again the gospel is to be preached freely ; that is without any of these fettering conditions or qualifications to be performed by us, that some hold up to view, as absolutely necessary to constitute a person, the proper object of the invitations of the gospel, or as it may justly be termed to welcome a person to come to Christ. I know of no qualification necessary to constitute a person an object of the gospel call, or invitation ; but that he be one of the
sinful

sinful family of Adam on earth. To tell persons to prepare themselves that they may thereby be the objects of gospel invitations, and be welcome to come to Christ excites in my mind, the idea of one's cleansing himself, that he may come to the fountain, or healing himself that the physician may make him welcome, to employ him. We know that such a way of reasoning in these common cases would be inconsistent ; and we know with equal certainty, that Christ is exhibited in the gospel as a fountain open to which we are, tho' morally polluted, invited to come, that we may be washed. And Christ himself expressly informs us, the whole need not the physician but they that are sick. And in the days of his flesh he went about doing good, and healing all manner of diseases, and as a physician calling the lame, the halt, and the maimed. We are to come sensible of our sinful and miserable state ; to throw ourselves, as we are at the feet of sovereign mercy saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Thus Christ sent his servants to call in the poor and miserable as starving creatures to a feast ; and the prophet Isaiah calls, hearken unto me, ye stout hearted and far from righteousness, and in another place, come let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them as snow. And thus wisdom crieth, and understanding putteth forth her voice, saying, Unto you O men I call, and my voice is to the sons of men, and I may add that the spirit says, come, and the bride says come, and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely.

We observe farther, the gospel is to be preached plainly and in a suitableness to the capacity of the hearers. To affect such pompous language, as may not be within the reach of an audience or hearer to understand, is to overshoot the design of the office and to display our weakness and folly. Far from this vanity the apostle could appeal to his hearers, for a testimony of his plainness of speech. And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of

the spirit,—that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Christ taught by plain and apt parables, and similitudes that babes in religion might understand.

The gospel is to be pathetically and sincerely preached. To deliver with a cold indifference the truths of the gospel, is to betray the importance of the subject and represent it to the hearers as of little worth. How different from this is the example of Christ, who when he beheld the city wept over it, and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not. The prophets were earnest in their addresses to men, Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel? God is in earnest speaking from heaven to earth. Hear O heavens, and give ear O earth, &c. The Apostles were earnest, hence Paul says, I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

By this I would not be thought, to mean any encouragement to the bawling and vociferous noise of such as play upon the passions of the ignorant without enlightening the understanding. Such a manner of address is odious to men of sense, and often hypocritical and wicked. But surely an insipid delivery is not becoming in those who are ambassadors for Christ and whose business it is, as in Christ's stead, to beseech mankind to be reconciled to God. A rational zeal and sincerity, should always accompany the administrations of public instructors. It may not be amiss to observe, that the gospel is to be delivered with a suitable degree of gravity, becoming dignity, and even authority. Any appearance of an airy and fantastic manner of address, is inconsistent with the weight and importance of the gospel of Christ, and betrays a dissimilarity between the message and the messenger. And a meanly, low, or vulgar style of language in an age of increasing learning, is to be carefully avoided; as tending to bring the gospel of the blessed Jesus unto contempt; and as marring the glory of the

the most honorable and benevolent institution, that ever was known in the world.

It was observed by the people that when Christ taught he did so, as one having authority and not as the scribes. A consciousness of duty should be the mental attainment of a spiritual instructor, and when that is the case, he may perform it with firmness whether people will hear, or forbear.

The gospel of Christ is to be preached with mildness or meekness and love. To hear a minister of good news and glad tidings, always, upon eternal torments does not, to say the least of it, co-incide with that character. Flashes of lightning from the sacred Desk may stun some, and flames of fire may frighten others, but I believe such a manner of instruction, dwelt chiefly upon, neither enlightens the understanding nor meliorates the heart.

No doubt, ministers are to preach the law in its spiritual meaning and extent ; and to inform the unregenerate, where they stand with respect to it, and to warn them of their real danger while they continue in that state. But to make the curses of the law, and denunciations of wrath our constant theme, is subverting our office, and betraying our weakness and want of judgment for our work.

Permit me yet, to add, that the gospel is to be preached persuasively. Thus the great and learned Apostle says, knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men. Moral suasion, reason, and argumentation are to be used with moral agents. These are to be drawn from the foundation of moral obligations—The sovereignty of God—his glory—his law--and his infinite perfections—the love of Christ—the evil nature of sin—and its dreadful consequences with the worth of our souls, and the souls of our fellow-creatures. And we are to reason with men, and to persuade them from a consideration of these important things as they are to be seen in the glass of Christ's sufferings, and death. Can men think of the sovereignty of God in Christ's death and not submit to it, when Christ said, father not my will, but thine be done ? can men view his glory in this glass, and not consider it the end of their creation, when the de-
signs

signs of the father, and the son were to glorify each other ? Christ says, Father glorify thy son that thy son may glorify thee—no where can we see the perfections of deity shine with such inconceivable splendour, as in the death of Christ. In the glass of Christ's death, his law is magnified, and made honourable, and its obligation obviously binding as a rule of life. It is here the love of Christ passeth knowledge—It is in this, that sin appears exceeding sinful ; and it is in this glass alone, that we see our souls, and the souls of our fellow mortals secure from the second death—It was when Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, that Felix trembled. And when he was before Agrippa, he reasoned in such a persuasive manner, that Agrippa was almost persuaded to be a Christian. But let us now in the

Third place, consider the objects, and extent of the preacher's commission.

1. The objects of his commission and administrations are, them that dwell on the earth, good, bad, and indifferent. He is to preach the gospel to saints and sinners. He is to preach for the progress and comfort of believers in the faith of Christ ; and to strengthen, stablish, and settle them. He is often to preach the necessity of manifesting their faith by their works. These things, says the apostle, I will, that thou affirm constantly, that they, who believe in God, be careful to maintain good works.

The spiritual instructor is also to preach to sinners. He is not to confine his instructions, to any one class of men. His business as a minister of Christ, lays greatly among sinners. Christ preached to and conversed with publicans and sinners, for their good. We are to follow his example, even when we may think, there is little prospect of reclaiming them. The duty is ours ; and the event belongs to him who makes the wind blow where it listeth. We are to resemble the prophet, when he said, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. While men are on the earth, we are never to be weary in endeavouring to reclaim them, but after death, we have nothing to do with them. We are neither to ascend to heaven, nor to descend into hell,

hell, and as little to explore the dark regions of superstitions and wild imaginations, for a purgatorial state, in search of objects for gospel administrations. We may rest assured that as death leaves, so judgment will find the state of man. There is no work, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whither thou goest.

Again the text informs us of the extent of a minister's commission on the earth.

Men of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. The gospel has been preached to the eastern nations ; and it has advanced westerly and must go in due time over the world, enduring from age to age like the sun and advancing until it pours down the flood of day covering the earth as the waters do the channels of the seas. No difference of nation or language, colour or kindred, enjoyment or employment, can be a sufficient objection, why the gospel should not be preached to all. Christ's commission runs thus ; go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. The Father's promise to his son is, I will give him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth, for his possession. Even Ethiopia, shall stretch her hand to God. But no doubt all this is to be brought about by the preaching of the gospel. Christ's sons are to be brought from far and his daughters from the ends of the earth.

It is not only consistent with the commission of Christ, the promise of the father, and the predictions of inspiration ; but the necessitous situation of all nations require that the gospel should be preached in this extensive manner. We find nations differing much in customs and habits, in colour and shape, in stature and strength and in many other things ; but alas, we find a striking resemblance in all nations in a moral view, while unenlightened by the gospel which is savage and sinful. The apostle informs us the whole world is guilty before God. When God looked down from heaven to see if any one did good ; the result of the inquiry is lamentable ; there is none that doeth good, no not one. They are altogether become filthy—The condemned and totally depraved state of all nations greatly required such a benevolent and generous dispensation as
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the gospel. God in mercy looked upon all nations, and determined to call his elect from the various nations of the earth ; and to bring them from all nations, kindreds, tongues and languages, and such a company of them when together, as no man can number. To effect this as well as to leave the unbelieving world inexcusable, it is necessary the gospel should be preached to the ends of the earth. But it is now time, I conclude by some short improvement.

In the light of this doctrine, we may see how holy, exemplary, and benevolent ministers of the gospel should be. They are to be swift in obedience to God, and in ministering to the spiritual necessities of men ; even as angels, who are sent forth, to minister unto the heirs of salvation. Let us feel the obligations we are under as accountable to God to be faithful in doing good ; and let us with the apostle be thankful, that he has put us into the ministry ; and honoured us with such an angelic office.

To you, my Reverend Brother, I heartily wish much of the spirit of your sacred office. May the Lord touch your lips with a live coal from off the altar, and make you shine in the administrations of the gospel as an angel of light. Live as angels do near God, and preach the gospel in his name, and strength to your people. Consider it as the greatest ornament of our nature, and a source of sublime and everlasting pleasure. Hold it up to your people in its glorious and distinguishing doctrines ; in its eternal author, in its sovereign decrees ; in its complete righteousness, in its irresistible grace, and in its everlasting effects upon man.

My friends and brethren of this church and congregation ; I congratulate you on this day's solemnity. You are receiving an established gospel ministry ; and we trust an angel in his office, to fly among you for your good. Be you swift to hear his message, as it may be indeed the word of God, and not of man. Receive him in love, and honor his person for his works sake. Improve the ordinances of the gospel for your spiritual advantage, and growth in grace. Hear it in faith and love, lay it up in your hearts,
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and practise it in *our* lives ; love its everlasting author, be resigned to its *divine* designs, be clothed with its everlasting righteousness, realize its everlasting efficacy, and give God the everlasting glory.

To conclude, Let me call upon all who have any love to the gospel, to rejoice in the extent of its administrations. Does the text say, it shall be preached to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people ? Then we may rest assured it shall be so ; and the time is coming, when it shall reign triumphant from the rising to the setting sun ; and all nations, kindreds, tongues and languages shall receive it. Then shall the gloomy regions of heathen darkness, be enlightened by the light of life. Then shall the wild fire of raving fanatics, and enthusiastic sectarians be extinguished by the flowing streams of the river of life. And then shall the ostentatious parade of hypocritical professors, and the censorious austerity of the supercilious, give way to the sincere and undissembled love and generous affection of the true christian. Then too, shall we find the quivers of infidelity exhausted, and that her envenomed arrows, have been darted in vain ; when all nations shall have received the everlasting gospel, with that purity, plainness and simplicity of gospel worship, which are the peculiar ornaments of the New Testament dispensation.

THE END.