

AN ADDRESS

AT THE

One Hundredth Anniversary

OF THE

ORGANIZATION

OF THE

NAZARETH CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

IN

SPARTANBURG, S. C.

BY

B. M. PALMER, D. D.

OF NEW ORLEANS, LA.

RICHMOND:
SHEPPERSON & CO., PRINTERS.
1872.

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P 48

C O R R E S P O N D E N C E.

NAZARETH CHURCH, July 5th, 1872.

To B. M. PALMER, D. D.

DEAR BROTHER : The undersigned have been appointed a Committee to express to you the heartfelt thanks of the Congregation, and their high appreciation of your services, and to solicit a copy of your appropriate and eloquent address, delivered at Nazareth on the 15th ult., for publication. In complying with this request, you will confer a favour upon us, and gratify the wishes of the large assembly who hung upon your lips during its delivery with such profound silence and intense interest.

Praying that your useful life may long be spared to recommend the gospel among your numerous friends and admirers in the privacies of social life, and to proclaim it in public with such clearness, eloquence and power, we are yours in the bonds of a common faith and hope.

R. H. REID.
C. A. BARRY.
W. K. CALDWELL.

NEW ORLEANS, LA., August 20, 1872.

To Messrs. ROBT. H. REID,
C. A. BARRY,
W. K. CALDWELL, } *Committee.*

DEAR BRETHREN : Your note reached me about the middle of July, and found me engaged in writing out a previous discourse for publication, which will explain the delay in forwarding this manuscript to you.

It has been scarcely possible, after the lapse of two months, to recall the extemporaneous language employed in its delivery. I have been satisfied, therefore, with reproducing the exact thoughts of the discourse, in such words as spontaneously arose in the composition of it anew, and which will better adapt it to be read.

With sincere prayer for the prosperity and usefulness of your venerable church, I remain,

Your obedient servant in the Gospel,
B. M. PALMER.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF NAZARETH CHURCH,

READ BY THE PASTOR,

THE REV. R. H. REID,

AT THE CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, JUNE 15TH, 1872.

EIGHT or ten families of Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania settled upon branches of the Tyger river, in Spartanburg, in 1761. Occasional visits of evangelists, sent out chiefly by the Synods of New York and Philadelphia, led to the selection of a place for a church. This place was chosen as the site for their sanctuary, because it was equidistant between what was then known as the upper and lower settlements. They were so careful to have it as near the centre as possible that two of the old men stepped the distance. The first house was built in 1765, the material being unhewn logs from the surrounding forest. They applied to the Presbytery of the Carolinas for preaching in 1766. In 1767 their numbers were increased by a colony directly from the North of Ireland. Between 1785 and 1790 the log house was displaced by a larger, more expensive frame building. The present house of worship was erected forty years ago. The church was organized in the Spring of 1772, by Joseph Alexander, D.D., of Bullock's Creek, York District. The road that passes below the church to Pinkneyville, the oldest public road in the county, was first opened as a bridle-path for Dr. Alexander to travel, when he came to discharge his ministerial duties. All who claimed to be members of the Presbyterian Church before removal, were enrolled without examination; except those who were so unfortunate as to have

“evil reports following them.” Such were required to wait till their cases could be investigated. Capt. Andrew Barry, Robert Nesbitt, John McElrath, and Thomas Peden were chosen as the first elders of the church ; and after some hesitancy and delay, growing out of their high conceptions of the office, and the personal character of those who should undertake to discharge its responsible duties, they accepted, and were ordained. The following list of names contains all their successors, to the present session :

Richard Barry, Sen.,	Richard Barry,
James Hadden,	Thomas B. Collins,
Thomas Bryce,	Jonathan Hadden,
Alexander Evins,	Denny Anderson,
Col. John Means,	M. P. Wakefield,
Thomas Gaston,	James Vernon, M. D.,
Andrew Coan,	Col. S. N. Evins,
Richard Daniel,	Michael Smith,
John Smith,	David M. Bryce,
Andrew Barry,	J. C. Caldwell.

All of these, except two, have crossed the flood, and are to-day on the banks of the river of life, which flows from the throne of God. The present session consists of seven elders—one old and superannuated, who, after a long life of usefulness, lingers on the banks of the river of death, highly esteemed by the congregation ; six active and efficient. Thirty-one elders in all have held office in the congregation.

Deacons were first chosen in obedience to an injunction of the General Assembly in 1840. Previous to this time the congregation managed her finances through Trustees. The first Deacons chosen were

John Fielder,	James A. Miller,
J. K. Means,	J. P. Miller, M. D.

The present bench of Deacons consists of six persons ; to which add the names of those who filled the office in the interim, and we have fifteen in all, who have served God and the congregation in this office.

The stated supplies of the congregation are first, Rev. Joseph Alexander, before, through, and after the Revolutionary war. During his ministration the congregation suffered much from Tories and Indians. Many lives were lost. Rev. James Templeton, from 1794 to 1802 ; Mr. Means, a licentiate—never ordained—a short time, about 1816 ; Rev. John Boggs, four years, and E. T. Buist, D. D., ten years. The labors of these ministers, together with an occasional suspension of the pulpit services, incident to changes, cover a period of forty years.

The pastors were first : Rev. Wm. C. Davis, from 1789 to 1794 ; Rev. James Gilleland, from 1802 to 1816 ; Rev. Michael Dickson, (an old man, still living in Milford, Ellis county, Texas,) from 1817 to 1832 ; Z. L. Holmes. The present pastorate, which is the longest, commenced in 1853. These pastorates cover a period of about 60 years.

This sketch is incomplete without the roll of members. This we are unable to furnish. The sessional records of the first sixty years were consumed by fire in the dwelling of the clerk.

We, as a congregation, have not improved our privileges and opportunities in the past as we ought to have done. We have not returned again to God in grateful love, zeal and obedience, according to all the benefits conferred upon us, neither we nor our fathers. It is because of God's tender mercies that we have not been consumed. Although the history of the church shows that the chastening hand of our Heavenly Father hath often been upon us ; and that we have oft waded through the deep waters of affliction : yet, we have much to-day for which to thank God. I now have the pleasure of introducing to you Dr. B. M. Palmer, of New Orleans, who, after devotional services, consisting of singing, reading the Scriptures and prayer, will deliver an appropriate address, the subject of which has been suggested by the occasion upon which we are assembled.

A D D R E S S .

YOU will readily recall that sublime doxology with which the apostle closes his prayer for the Ephesian church, and the splendid climax in which it shoots up, as in a spike of glory: "*Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that now worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.*"* There is no theme more suited to this august occasion; which brings together the pious descendants of a pious ancestry, to worship at the altar reared a hundred years ago upon this sacred hill. The voice of solemn praise then broke the silence which had reigned upon it from the creation. In the virgin forest, amid the vistas through which they walked as through long-drawn aisles of some vast temple, while above them hung the dome of heaven fretted with stars, your fathers worshipped here. Just as of old,

" Ere man had learned
To hew the shaft, and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them; ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems,—in the darkling wood,
Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down
And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks
And supplication."

From the green isle beyond the sea, and from Scotland's glen and heather, came the children of the martyrs, who had sealed with blood their testimony for Christ's

crown and covenant. Edging their way along the slope of the Alleghanies, the water-shed of a great continent, their weary feet rested at length upon the fertile banks of the Ennoree and Tyger, and founded upon this venerable spot a plantation for God. By obscure bridle-paths through the tangled wood, across the rocky fords, over which your wild streams yet dash their shallow flood, they came, singly or in groups, to the rude sanctuary which has long since yielded to this spacious building of brick. Here the aged pastor folded the flock, long since gathered with himself into the great fold above. Here the ripe Christian sat down at the sacramental board, who has long since been seated at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven. Here backsliders were recovered under the discipline of Christ's kingdom, who have long since wondered, amid the joys of the upper temple, how they ever went astray from so much goodness and love. Here the poor in spirit knelt, and received the first pledge of that heavenly inheritance, into full possession of which they have long since entered. Here godly parents, under the seal of the covenant, claimed Jehovah as the God of their offspring, who, with those same children, have long since been gathered into the great family church on high. There, just behind us, they all now sleep: those ancient names graven upon memorial stones, which a hundred years have made the watchwords of piety and faith through this broad land. And two generations more rest beside them, in the patient hope of that call which shall break their slumber, to be for ever with the Lord.

What changes, too, a century has wrought! The vine brought out of Egypt, and planted here, has taken root and filled the earth. The hills are covered with its shadow, and the boughs thereof are like the goodly cedars. It hath sent out its boughs unto the sea, and its branches unto the river.* The sons and daughters, who in a hundred years

* Ps. lxxx. 8-11.

have gone forth from this mother church, have borne the gospel in their migrations, and scattered the germs of other churches far over the distant west. Could they all be gathered back to mingle in this scene to-day, the song of joy would swell to heaven like the sound of many waters. Let us bring them together, in our thought at least! Let us call upon these silent graves to yield up all the forms which in a hundred years have crossed the threshold of this venerable church! The aged grandsire, with the sire, and child of the third descent, let them all awake! For if the spirits of the just made perfect are ever sent to earth upon ministries of love, surely, this is the scene they would overshadow with their wings, and bear the worship of this solemn hour to the courts above. I will people this sacred hill with them all, the living and the dead, who are bound to it by the associations of a common altar and a common home. Before the church of a hundred years—the living and the dead, gathered in a sweet re-union—I will discourse of that which should send an equal pulse of joy amongst the redeemed above and the redeemed below. With the awe which should be felt in the presence of such an assembly, and which should follow the suggestion of such a theme, I propose to exhibit,

THE GLORY WHICH THE INFINITE AND BLESSED GOD SECURES TO HIMSELF THROUGH HIS IMMORTAL CHURCH.

In relation to this, the church may be regarded under two aspects: Either as passively reflecting the Divine glory upon the universe, or as the active instrument employed in carrying out the purposes of the Divine will. I desire to present her under both: *Negatively*, as the sphere in which Jehovah has made the most perfect disclosure of His own perfections; *positively*, as the agent by whom He accomplishes His plans of infinite benevolence and love.

I. That the church is instituted for the first of these two ends, appears plainly from the testimony of the apostle when he says, “to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church

the manifold wisdom of God.”* So, again, the inspired Peter, speaking of the things contained in the gospel, adds, “which things the angels desire to look into.”† Even the angels in heaven are remanded to the church on earth, as, in the language of Bengel, “the theatre in which the Divine works are displayed;” or as, in the language of Alford, “the mirror of God’s wisdom—chromatic, so to speak, with the rainbow colours of the light which in itself is one and undivided.” But let us break this complex thought into its constituent parts. Of course, the essential glory of God is beyond the comprehension of human reason; it can be known only under the forms in which it is manifested. When Moses offered that over-bold prayer, “I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory,” the presumptuousness of it was rebuked in the reply, “thou canst not see My face, for there shall no man see Me and live.” It is figured to us, however, under the image of light: “Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment;”‡ “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.”§ This radiance of the Deity, which the church catches upon her thought, and reflects in her worship, we may attempt to separate into the beams which compose it; precisely as the material splendour which floods a hemisphere may be broken into rays, and passed through the prism of our science. If we may not penetrate into the bosom of the divine glory itself, we may view the reflection of it in the analysis of our conceptions.

1. *It is through the church we have the largest view of law.* The grandest generalizations of our modern science are found in this extension of natural law throughout the universe. Not content simply with the observation and classification of isolated facts, or with merely tracing the order of their recurrence, science explores the hidden causes by which they are produced. The uniformity of these results, under similar conditions, has led to the exposition of general laws, as formulas expressing the measure and the method

* Ephesians, iii. 10.

† Psalms civ. 2.

‡ 1 Peter, i. 12.

§ 1 Tim. vi. 16.

by which some secret and subtle force is seen to operate. The innumerable adjustments in nature, and the various properties with which all forms of matter are endowed, do not exhaust the interrogations of science, until the pervading laws are enunciated under which the former are effected and the latter are developed. Law is seen to be enfolded within law, as the investigation runs back to the more concealed relations and properties of all substance ; which science lays bare, as you strip off the successive leaves of the rose-bud in your garden. Then, since law is but the formulated expression of the operation of all the forces in nature, and since our first conception of force itself is derived from the conscious exercise of our own living will,* the last generalization carries us up to the supreme and personal will of that august Being by whom the curious mechanism of the universe was contrived, and the whole world of matter is seen to be bound to the throne of Almighty power.

We may turn the thought around, and view it from another side. These mysterious forces themselves, which we discover everywhere working under definite rules, science is seeking to reduce into unity. The foreshadowing hint has already been thrown out, which only needs verification to be converted into one of the grandest prophecies of science, that they are all but modifications of one single and comprehensive force, ordained by Infinite power, as the ultimate spring of all the activities we behold. Thus broad and splendid are the steps of that inductive reasoning by which we ascend "from nature up to nature's God." For the only nexus remaining to be supplied, is that which subsists between the energy of this all-pervading force in the world of matter, and the influence of that silent and eternal Will which lies behind it, and actuates the whole. This, of course, it is beyond the range of science to disclose. But if she leads us up her grand stairway, and places us upon the last of these generalizations, it requires only a single bound to

* For some of the illustrations in this section, the writer is indebted to an admirable discussion in the second chapter of Argyll's "Reign of Law."

plant our feet upon the stepping stones of the everlasting throne upon which the God of all law sits in supreme majesty and glory.

Not only do we discover law, in some form, wherever we turn our gaze, but we are overwhelmed with surprise and delight in tracing the extension of one and the same law as far as the exploration of the universe has been carried. The very same principle of attraction, for example, which brings a stone to the earth, prevails as the bond which holds the planets in their orbits, sweeping in the void immense; and what is more worthy to be noted, it is found to work under the same rule of proportion expressed by the same formula, as upon the surface of our own globe. The law of gravitation is discovered to exist and rule throughout all space, which science has as yet traversed. The vast power of the modern telescope reveals another extension of the same law. It has resolved some of those cloud-like appearances upon the distant sky into clusters of stars, bound together by the same harmony as our own solar system, and moving in appointed orbits around their central suns. It has not been enough to people the immensity of space with these uncounted worlds; but they are grouped into vast families, with domestic ties which relate them to their respective centres and define the spheres in which they shall be duly subordinated. Even this is not all. These associated systems themselves sweep with a common movement around a more distant centre still, which attracts and confines them all, but in orbits so vast that ages are required to mark their slow but steady progression.* Thus, worlds around worlds revolve—"orb upon orb, cycle upon epicycle"—until thought reels under the mighty suggestion, that the burning throne of the infinite Creator is the pivot upon which the universe is balanced—the centre from

* Our solar system, for example, has travelled, since the creation, over only one three-thousandth part of its immense orbit, though moving at the rate of 28,000 miles per hour; and requiring a period of more than eighteen millions of years to complete the entire circuit.

which all the paths are described in which unnumbered worlds move in perfect harmony—the source of that eternal power which gives to all force its energy, and to all law its form. And what shall we say of the wonders of the Spectrum Analysis, which, if they do not eclipse all previous discoveries, promise new revelations of which science till now had not ventured even to dream? What can be more marvellous than, by the feeble rays of those far distant stars, to determine the materials of which they are composed, and, by identifying them with those of our own planet, to establish the homogeneity of the universe?

Can there be anything grander than all this? To see the worlds, as they are balanced in empty space, all formed of the same essential matter, and thus of kin to each other in their most distant removes; to behold them swayed by the same subtle forces, working under the same rule and measure—to view them in their silent circuits, obedient to one supreme principle as the bond of their allegiance to the infinite Will which controls them all: can there be, I ask, a conception more sublime than this? Yes, we must rise into another realm of thought; we must soar above the physical, into the moral sphere; we must regard law, not as expressing mere power and will, but as revealing the holiness and blessedness of the Deity Himself. This law, springing as it does from God's very nature, is, for that reason, one and singular. There can no more be two laws for the moral universe than there can be two Gods. That law must be alone which expresses God's character, which announces the fundamental distinction of right and wrong, which expounds the relations of Jehovah with His creatures, and which affirms His claim upon their service and love. What the moral law is, therefore, to one intelligent being, it is to every other in the whole universe. It is the same to angels in heaven, to men upon earth, and to devils in hell. To all beings in all worlds, who are endowed with reason and conscience, it must express the consummate holiness of God; and must, therefore, be the perfect standard of

all rectitude, the infallible expounder of all duty, and the absolute measure of all obligation. To whatever extent the conditions may vary in which these beings are placed, to that extent may this law be modified in the details of its application ; but it must ever remain the same in its principle and root, making the same exactions, and imposing the same terms upon all beneath its sway. What is there in the widest extension of physical law comparable with this absolute universality of the moral ? The one depends upon the simple determination of the Divine will, which was perfectly free to have ordained otherwise ; the other springs out of the Divine character itself, and cannot be cancelled even in thought. The one is carried on from world to world, until the fancy is lost in the immensity which it seeks to explore ; the other clings to us as an immediate truth, bound to the understanding by the deduction of an inexorable logic. We cannot resist the inference, that a law which defines moral relations wherever they exist, which is the perfect transcript of the Divine perfections, and the unerring test of the creature's obedience, must apply equally throughout the whole government of God, and be as single and alone as the awful Being out of the depths of whose nature it is seen to issue.

Now, it is in the history of the church, and through the plan of redemption, that this law receives its fullest exposition. Man, created holy, is placed under its jurisdiction, and by voluntary transgression falls beneath its curse. And when infinite wisdom and love devise a method of salvation, this law lifts its stern front across the threshold of the scheme, and demands of the Mediator the full satisfaction of its claims. If He interposes for the deliverance of sinners who are crushed under the penalty, then must He bow His head even unto death. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered." The only-begotten and well-beloved of the Father must not be spared a single pang essential to the incurred penalty. What a sublime vindication of this universal law, when the channel

of mercy must be cut into the bosom of justice itself, and the integrity and majesty of the divine government be vindicated in the very grace by which the sinner is saved! Here, then, is the first illustration of God's glory in the law; that even where sin is only imputed, and no taint of actual transgression rests upon the person of the Mediator, yet can the law make no abatement of its demands; but exacts of the Surety the whole indebtedness of the principal.

In addition to this, consider the completeness of that obedience by which this law has been confirmed. I need not remind you that the formal nature of law depends upon the union of precept and penalty. The one goes before, and marks out the course of duty; the other comes after, and binds that duty upon the conscience. The two cannot be separated without destroying the very conception of law. If the penalty be cancelled, leaving only the precept, this degenerates into mere counsel or advice; if, again, the precept be withdrawn, leaving only the penalty, that sinks into an arbitrary threat. It is only in their indissoluble connexion that law, as such, is constituted at all. It is worthy of your attention that the obedience of Christ is that alone which has ever been rendered to the law in both of its essential parts. The obedience of angels is restricted to the precept, for they were never under subjection to the penalty; the obedience of fallen men and of devils, if that can be termed obedience in any proper sense which is involuntarily endured, is as exclusively rendered to the Sanction. But of the adorable Redeemer it is written, that "He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners;" whilst, as the substitute of the guilty, He went down into the depths of the curse under the judicial sentence of His Father. It was an obedience, therefore, that "magnified the law, and made it honourable;" for it covered its entire breadth and fathomed its lowest depth. It is the only obedience that was ever *finished*: that of all other beings is an obedience always *continuing*, and never brought to a close. This one obedience of our great Head exhausts the entire contents of

the law. The Mediator bore it up completed, in His own ascension, to the throne of the Law-giver; and there it hangs, in the glorious Heaven, over against the seat of all majesty and dominion, the perfect counterpart of the law, the great reflecting mirror which throws back upon the universe all the brightness of its rays, its perfect correlate and measure.

You have only now to combine with this the infinite dignity of Him by whom this august obedience has been rendered. When the great problem was announced, How shall God be just, and yet justify the ungodly, a silence deep and awful as that of eternity itself reigned through the vast senate of angels and cherubim around Jehovah's throne. Not one was competent to assume the majestic trust; not one could be found to fulfil the conditions it involved; not one who had authority over his own life, to lay it down, or power to take it up after it had been offered in sacrifice; not one who did not owe obedience for himself, through the whole length of his existence; not one who could lawfully choose to undergo the judicial displeasure of the great King, in whose favour alone was life. Only He, who dwelt in His Father's bosom; only He, who sat in the midst of the throne, in the full equality of the Godhead; only He, whose nature was the source and spring of the law that needed to be vindicated; only He, who was Himself the Life; only He, whose official prerogative it is to reveal all that lay hidden in the abyss of the Divine being and will; only He, who was Jehovah's fellow, could answer to the united challenge of justice and of love, in the cry, "Lo I come; I delight to do thy will, O my God." The amazing wonder through all Eternity will be God's law obeyed by God's own Son. The law, that was universal in its stretch over all spirits in Heaven and in Earth; the law, that could not bend from its stern integrity in the most desperate exigency the Universe has ever known; the law, that wrapped its folds around the holy Mediator, and stung Him with its curse in the hour when He "made His soul an offering for

sin ;” the law, that could find its vindicator only in the God-man. Oh say, ye who are stirred by even these cold words, what conception have you now of the grandeur of God’s law? Say, is it not through the Church of the Redeemed the largest view of it is gained? Do you wonder that the angels, with responsive praises, join in the anthem, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain?” or that seraphs cover their faces before this illuminated law, and cry one to another, “Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts; the WHOLE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY?”

2. *Through the Church God makes a manifold disclosure of Himself; as, for example, in the mystery of His being, in the resources of His wisdom; in the perfection of His holiness, and in the riches of His love.* We can take only a glance at these topics, with no reference to their separate elucidation, but only in illustration of the general thought.

It would be the height of presumption in us to determine how complete must be our knowledge of God in order to an acceptable worship. It is perfectly certain that the knowledge of no creature, however exalted, is exhaustive; and equally certain that small degrees of knowledge are found in some to be united with a most unquestionable piety. This much is revealed to us, “He that cometh unto God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” There must be a recognition of God as a personal being, standing to us in definite personal relations. He must be endowed with intelligence and will; and He must be invested with the attributes of wisdom, justice, power, goodness, holiness and truth. Without the first, He could not be a Ruler at all; and without the last, His administration could not secure the allegiance and reverence of His subjects. But whether under a religion of pure law any further revelation of the mode of His being would be indispensable: whether, for instance, to the holy angels in Heaven there is a necessary discovery of the Deity in His tripersonal subsistence, it would be worse than idle to conjecture. Leaving these points to the silence of that reserve

which the Scriptures maintain, this at least may be safely affirmed, that the disclosure which we have of this transcendent mystery is actually made through the scheme of Redemption; and over the secrets which are contained within the ark of the covenant the angels bend with adoring wonder.

The Bible opens with pregnant hints of a plural subsistence in the Godhead; which would, perhaps, only tantalize with the obscurity of their suggestions, if they were not interpreted by a clearer exposition which throws its light back upon them. In the prophetic books, where revelation takes a wider range, though using still the cipher which belongs to prophecy, these hints swell into larger references, like the seeds that are just ready to burst into the organized plant. But in the fulness of times, when the New Testament records the work of redemption actually accomplished in the personal history of our Lord, the whole doctrine of the Trinity stands definitely revealed. The gradual development of this stupendous truth may be referred to what has always seemed to me a regulative principle of the Divine procedure; which is, that God's revelation of Himself is not made in the way of didactic exposition, but through an historical outworking of His perfections. We thus come to know them, not by speculative thought, but by seeing them displayed in the intensity of their own vigour. The Divine wisdom, goodness and power are revealed in the works of Creation; and we are remanded to these for the proof of His Godhead; "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." In the same way we are brought to apprehend His justice and truth, through the actual administration of law, and the experience of its effects upon human destiny. There is, indeed, abundant room for speculation and reason in taking up the facts which are thus disclosed, and harmonizing them into a system; but the antecedent knowledge of the facts themselves is derived from their positive outworking in the sphere of history. In accord-

ance, then, with this principle, this stupendous truth would be made known only as it was evolved out of some mighty plan, in whose folds it lay hid for a season.

But whatever the solution of this progressive revelation of so fundamental a truth, the unquestionable fact remains, that the articulate exposition of the Trinity stands connected with the history of Redemption ; which, indeed, is unintelligible without the presupposition. It has to be assumed as the basis of the entire scheme ; and the offices to be discharged in its accomplishment are set over against each other in such sharp antithesis, as not to allow their consolidation upon a single person. The God of the Socinian could not possibly be the author of Redemption, and the whole method of grace falls through with the denial of the Trinity. The consistency of logic has always compelled the rejection of Atonement by all who deny a distinction of persons in the unity of the Godhead. Even the Sabellian hypothesis, framed expressly to reconcile this seeming contradiction, fails utterly to meet the exigencies of the scheme of Redemption, in failing to recognize the reality of this distinction in the mode of the Divine subsistence itself. Why, the very plan originates in an Eternal Covenant, to which there must be distinct parties, with mutual stipulations. How is it possible that one and the same person shall be both the sender and the sent ? Shall be *in* authority to give the commission, and *under* authority to receive it ? Shall be the representative of the law inflicting its judicial censures, and yet the representative of the criminal who is under condemnation for his fault ? How shall the same individual be the victim upon the altar of sacrifice, and also pour down the fire from Heaven that consumes the offering ? How shall the same identical party make the atonement, and also officially accept it ; or work out a righteousness through obedience, and also pronounce the sentence of justification on account of it ? It is needless to push these interrogations further. Obviously, the parts in the scheme require to be distributed. The offices of the Father and of

the Son are too antagonistic to be fulfilled except by persons who are distinct. In the same way, it would be easy to exhibit the contrast between the offices of the Son and of the Spirit, which forbids their consolidation upon either of the two. Thus, through the Church, as the theatre of this vast operation of grace, the glorious revelation of the Triune God is articulately made.

The arrangements of grace equally illustrate the resources of His wisdom, the riches of His love, and the glory of His holiness. The seal of death appeared, upon transgression, to rest for ever upon the human race. Not a single principle in the nature of the law, nor a solitary precedent in its administration, cast a ray of hope upon their destiny. If a thought of pardon had glanced upon some mind more daring in adventure than the rest, the presumption would be extinguished by the decree executed upon the rebellious angels, which seemed to establish finally the reign of absolute justice. But He, whose nature was love, chose to manifest the glory of this attribute in a direction that was not only new, but where we should regard it as for ever restrained. It pitched upon sinners bound under the curse; and the measure of its exercise is that eternal love He bears to His own Son, to whom these are given, and in whom they are graciously viewed as the objects of His favour. No wonder that the heavens are bowed with astonishment, and that the angels are mute with surprise, as infinite love sweeps across the precedents of law, and takes into its bosom the very children of wrath! But how shall the difficulties be overcome which emerge in the conception of mercy? Ah! if you demand a conclusive proof that the gospel is from God, find it here, in the bare idea of Mediation. It could originate only with God. Only He who made the law could determine whether it admitted a substitute for the guilty. Only He who knew the mystery of His own plural subsistence, could find the party competent to such an amazing trust. "Oh! the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!" not only to conceive the plan,

and to provide the agent, but to unite in that Mediator's person the two parties who were to be reconciled in Him ! How vast must be the resources of the wisdom which shall solve the mighty problem of sin, and compass the purposes of infinite compassion and love ! And how consummate the holiness which exalts the authority of law in the exercise of pardon, and turns the apostacy of man into the most copious illustration of the Divine purity. Surely we may exclaim with the apostle, "Now unto Him be glory by the church," through whom this most perfect display is made of all that is awful, and blessed, and infinite in the Godhead !

3. *In the church is fully illustrated the truth of God's conversableness with His creatures.* Nothing in the history of religious thought is more remarkable than the tenacity with which this conviction clings to the human mind. It is not overwhelmed by the largest views that may be entertained of God's dreadful majesty ; it is not appalled by the difficulty, so immense, of bridging the chasm which separates the creature from the Infinite and the Eternal ; it is not extinguished even by the sense of guilt, nor by the conscious shame and terror with which a sinner recoils from the holiness and justice of the Deity. Beneath all these emotions of natural awe and of guilty fear, the secret impression slumbers still, that the God who made man in His own image will stoop to him, even in his degradation and ruin. It finds expression in vain superstitious rites, with which the Supreme Being is propitiated, and especially in the incarnations which have a place in every form of human religion. Doubtless, these are but the fragments of an original revelation, the traces of a primitive faith traditionally preserved amongst all nations—perverted, indeed, and rendered grotesque by the fantastic conceptions of those who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and naturally sought to shape Him after the pattern of their own desire. Whilst, however, this may explain the origin of the idea, and perhaps, also, of the forms it has assumed in every system of idolatry, it does not account for the wonderful tenacity with which it

has held its place in the universal belief of mankind. It must have its ground in some fundamental principle of our common nature. That principle, I am inclined to think, is the instinct of creaturely dependence, which goes forth in a blind craving after a supreme power upon which to lean for support. This will easily coalesce with the sentiment of awe inspired by the majesty of God; for the more He is magnified in our conception, the more He is felt to be worthy of regard and trust. When it is seen that "in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," the repose should be absolute, unless the consciousness of ill-desert should lead us to shrink in terror from His presence.

We have just here a touching proof of the tenderness with which the gospel condescends to the deepest longings of the human soul, in the way by which the true Father-hood of God is realized to us, and that, too, in perfect harmony with His own holiness and truth. By the work of redemption and sanctification every obstacle is removed, whether arising from the sinner's relation to the law, or from his actual character. God in Christ becomes the loving Father of those who are not only His children by the law of dependence as creatures, but by the law of grace as renewed in His own most blessed image. Adoption into His family is effectuated through spiritual union with His only begotten Son, and by the new birth of the Holy Ghost. It is not, as amongst men, a mere fiction of law, but rests upon the basis of a real oneness with the Son, who is the original and sole proprietor of the relation and the title; and it is accomplished by a veritable though spiritual birth, analogous to what constitutes sonship according to the flesh. To all such, as dear children, the eternal Father affords His comforting presence, and offers the privilege of the most intimate communion.

In the person of Christ, moreover, we have the only incarnation of the Deity that is substantive and true; of which all the incarnations of heathenism are the veriest caricature. It is not a little singular, that whilst a sense of dependence

drives the creature to some vague conception of a universal Father, and whilst the notion of an incarnation offers the only method by which the Deity can descend to the plane of human intercourse, yet this great idea has never been wrought out in any system of religion or philosophy, otherwise than as a miserable travesty of the truth. With all the religious instincts pointing to it as a necessity, and with the premonition of it afforded in a primitive revelation, yet, until it was accomplished as an objective fact in the person of our Lord, the suggestion has been wholly unmanageable by human reason, and has never been developed even into a consistent theory. The so-called incarnations of the Greek and Indian mythologies are the vaguest of all possible shadows. The gods assume a bodily form, without the substance; in which temporary disguise they appear to their votaries, and then vanish away. In no case do they become real men, by an actual assumption of our nature with its essential properties. But in the evangelical record, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst men. The incarnate Redeemer was a true and proper man, "made in all respects like unto His brethren," yet without sin. He was born, lived and walked upon the earth for three and thirty years; was compassed about with our infirmities; ate, drank, and slept; endured scorn, and sorrow, and all the forms of spiritual anguish; died, was buried, and rose again from the tomb. The history is that of a true humanity from His birth to His final ascension into glory. In contrast with this, how insipid are all the stories of Jupiter, or of Vishnu, as to their occasional and illusory manifestations among the children of flesh and blood! It is the melancholy attitude of our fallen race, aside from a gracious revelation, that it is the subject of original and instinctive cravings, which cannot be extinguished, but which cannot be met by any method that can be discovered in human thought. Indeed, how could the mystery of "God manifest in the flesh" be anticipated, so long as the indispensable condition of any incarnation was unknown, in the personal relation of the eternal Word as

the only revealer of the Godhead? How great, then, is the glory of the church, within whose sphere the great fact of the incarnation has been wrought out; bridging, as it does, the vast interval between God and the creature, and realizing the truth of His conversableness with all such as are fitted by grace to enjoy the lofty fellowship!

4. It would be criminal in this connection not to signalize *the church as the sphere of the Holy Spirit's agency in applying the benefits of redemption*. We have already seen that a distribution of offices is required in the economy of grace. This, then, is assigned as the office of the third Person of the Godhead: He is the agent who, under the double commission of the Father and of the Son, undertakes to work out the issues of grace in the actual experience of the redeemed. He finds them all by nature "dead in trespasses and sins;" it is His function to quicken them into spiritual life. The purchased salvation, which is first applied in the new birth, is completed through His indwelling presence and power, whereby the believer is both sanctified and sealed unto the glory which is his portion for ever in heaven. From the nature of the case, this work of saving power is wrought upon the individual, in the renewal of his nature, and in his union by faith with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is important, however, to observe, that the individual is not left to struggle alone with the temptations of life, but is gathered with others into a sacred society, under whose discipline he is educated, until meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. This society is the church; described as *invisible*, when viewed as including all those, both on earth and in heaven, given by the Father to the Son, who have been by Him graciously redeemed from the curse, and who are the subjects of the renewing and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost; termed *visible*, as embracing all those upon earth, with their children, who profess the religion of Christ, and who are brought under subjection to the laws of that kingdom which He has visibly established amongst men; called the church *militant*, while still under the discipline of grace, and contending for

the faith and crown of Jesus; and the church *triumphant*, when translated above, and secured for ever in a state of holiness and bliss. This society of the redeemed is constituted an organic whole, in possession of a corporate life, under subjection to our Divine Head, with ordinances and laws imposed by His sole authority, with a charter which defines and secures all her privileges, with reciprocal duties between its constituent members, and with a distinct function to fulfil in time and in eternity. In this unity, as "the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all," the church has a glory peculiar to herself. She is distinguished from all other kingdoms in being purely spiritual, bound to an unseen Head, and inhabited by the Holy Ghost, through whom she is herself instinct with life. She is placed under laws, and she is ordained unto ends, which are alike spiritual and holy. She reflects, in her constitution, functions, nature, and aim, the spirituality and holiness of the glorious God, by whom she was established, in whom she subsists, and to whom she will be translated as her portion at last. In all this, it is easy to see how there shall be "glory to God, in the church, throughout all ages." Made to be God's family by the adopting love of the Father; constituted "the bride, the Lamb's wife," by holy marriage with the blessed Son; sanctified as a temple by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; a revenue of praise goes up for ever to the triune Jehovah from this perfect Theocracy, where the subjects are all kings, and the worshippers are all priests—from this "holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God," the kingdom of life and of power, in which God doth for ever dwell among men.

But there is a more special aspect of the Spirit's relation to the church, by which the Divine glory is equally illustrated. Consider, then, the amazing condescension of this blessed Agent, in bringing His own purity into contact with the sinner's pollution. We admire the infinite stoop of Divine love, when the Son took upon Him the form of a servant, and bore the burden of our guilt and shame. Is

there less, when the Holy Spirit enters the heart which is as a cage of unclean birds, is buffeted with the sinner's scorn and resistance, and deals with the stain and defilement which He alone can purge away? Alas! with what patience must He endure the frowardness and folly, the unbelief and vacillation of the redeemed themselves, in bringing them at last to a meetness for heaven!

So, too, with the practical difficulties to be surmounted in the prosecution of His work. If there are problems of law which emerge in the very design of redemption; if there be unsearchable wisdom in devising the principle of representation, and of a vicarious atonement; if there be matchless power in constituting the person of the Mediator, so that it shall be equally related to both the parties at variance; there are problems not less intricate in the sphere of the Spirit's agency, as He works within the sanctuary of the human soul, and touches the secret springs of human activity. Indeed, it is precisely upon this plane we strike those knotty questions which have always been the puzzles of philosophy, and which are as far removed as ever from a scientific solution. The interior problem of all, the mode of the Spirit's operation in the new birth, is expressly removed by the Saviour himself beyond the sphere of speculation, when He compares it to the wind, whose sound we hear, but know not whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. But after this, there remain a thousand points which baffle reason in the Spirit's action upon the human soul. How He stimulates the understanding, guides the reason, rouses the conscience, and controls the will, imparting a new energy to all these faculties by the pulse of a new life which throbs through them all, whilst we preserve an unimpaired consciousness of our own freedom and responsibility: these are questions which sound along the ages, with only their own returning echo as the answer. The ultimate fact, however, attests itself, that the Divine agency and the human do actually blend as the necessary factors in every event. The one affirms to us a Providence; the other, the free instru-

ments who accomplish its ends ; and both are co-ordinated in history as the joint product. That we are incompetent to show where or how these two planes intersect, cannot cancel the fact itself. And the perfect ease with which the Almighty Spirit masters the problems which scandalize our wisdom—moving amidst the complex powers of the human soul, like the breath among the wheels, without contravening a single principle of the delicate machinery, is a perpetual eulogy upon the wisdom and power of God. Such, again, is the glory which the church renders to Him in its doxology of praise.

5. I complete the circuit of this exposition by a brief reference to *the glory of Jehovah as the eternal portion of the church transfigured in heaven*. It is so in measure even here upon earth. The great promise of the covenant is, “I will be a God to them, and they shall be to Me a people.” It hath pleased the Father, that “In Him (Christ) the fulness of the Godhead bodily should dwell ;” and “of that fulness have we received, and grace for grace.” Though now only “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” yet are we “changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It begins in “the new man, which after God is created in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness.” It is continued in “the work of grace with power,” wrought in our advancing sanctification, until this is completed in the glory that shall follow. Of that eternal state it becomes us to speak with cautious reserve. Even the great seer of the church, who in the isle of Patmos had visions of the city of God, comes down from those lofty revelations to say only this, “Beloved, now are we the sons of God ; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” And it is enough. To see Jesus as He is, to awake in His likeness, to be filled with His joy, and to be clothed with His glory : this, without knowledge of precise details, is enough to satisfy the ambition of any creature. To be lifted through grace above the

condition of mere subjects, to be drawn up into the bosom of the divine Father, to be joint-heirs with His own beloved Son ; this will be heaven. It will then be understood what it is to have God as our portion. All His perfections are made over to us, not only as the guarantee, but as the source of every supply. His wisdom will be our knowledge ; His truth our pledge ; His power our defence ; His justice our righteousness ; His holiness our purity ; His love, our solace ; His fellowship, our communion ; His blessedness our joy ; His glory our dignity. We cannot conceive of a perfect being who does not desire to communicate ; and God has created whole orders of intelligent beings, that from His infinite fulness streams of blessing may perpetually flow to ravish their souls with ineffable delight. His sovereign grace is but the method of drawing the creatures nearer to Himself, that the transcendent riches of His glory may be their satisfying portion throughout eternity. This will be the Creator's glory for ever ; the out-flowing of exhaustless being, of infinite power, of boundless love, of unspeakable blessedness, reflected in the joy and worship of countless myriads, who stand as crystal pillars around His throne, to throw back upon Him the brightness of His own radiance for ever.

II. The sweetness of these meditations has beguiled me into so wide an excursion, that little space is left for the second branch of this discussion, which I had intended to bring into special prominence, viz : THE VALUE OF THE CHURCH AS A PRACTICAL AGENCY FOR ACCOMPLISHING THE PURPOSES OF INFINITE BENEVOLENCE. Perhaps, however, the emphasis will be the greater from the necessity of compressing what I have to say within the narrowest compass.

1. *Let us view the church, then, in her universality.* Her influence is destined to extend over the whole earth, and her existence will continue through all time, whilst in eternity she will embrace angels and men within her pale. One of the most subtle forms of modern infidelity consists in appropriating the benevolent feature of the gospel, and

transmuting this into the sum of all religion. It breaks the connexion between the two tables of the law, sinks out of view the supreme obligations of the creature to God, distorts and magnifies the relative duties which man owes to himself and to his fellows, and degrades religion into a mere sentiment of universal charity. In this gospel of an infidel humanitarianism, the essential doctrines of atonement and justification, of the new birth, and sanctification by the Holy Ghost, are carefully eliminated. The blessed Redeemer is stripped of all the offices by which He is constituted the Saviour of a lost race, and stands forth only as the apostle of humanity, to establish once more the brotherhood of mankind. He realizes in himself the idea of a perfect benevolence, wins the world by the persuasion of a blessed example, and breathes out the influence of a gentle enthusiasm which is destined to inaugurate at length the reign of universal peace and good will. Multitudes, deceived by the unctuous phraseology in which this religion of mere sentiment is set forth, fall beneath the fatal imposture of words, and exchange Christianity for just the most mawkish and effeminate delusion that ever affected the aspect and the gait of an earnest and robust piety. But really one is at a loss to perceive what this ambitious scheme proposes to accomplish more than the gospel of Christ, in reknitting the broken bonds of human brotherhood; or, how upon its basis anything broader or grander can be erected, than what is realized to us in the church of the Redeemer. Granting all its postulates, can it work out anything more universal than the society which embraces believers of all ages, and in all lands; the bonds of whose communion even death cannot dissolve, and which in eternity will bind all the holy in perpetual fellowship around the throne of God and the Lamb? If anything in the shape of brotherhood can go beyond this, without obliterating those principles of rectitude upon which the very notion of society depends, we would like to see the terms in which it is described.

Let us place the two systems side by side for a moment. Christianity views man in his fallen estate, under the just condemnation of the law he has broken, and yearns over the community of ruin in which the entire race is plunged. It recognizes, then, the brotherhood of man at the outset, and and upon the scale of the whole race. Can humanitarianism exceed it in the breadth of its sympathy? Again: Upon the efficacy of that atonement which was made upon Calvary, Christianity offers a free pardon and a finished salvation to all who will simply accept the boon; and the church, in the very charter which secures her own blessings, is commissioned to go with the tender of the same into all the world, and proclaim it to every creature. Has the sentimental gospel any more radical cure to offer for "the ills that flesh is heir to," or any more substantial good to bestow than that of eternal life? Or has she any better agency than the Saviour's church to proclaim her offers, or can she bind it by stronger obligations to fidelity in its trust? Again: Every soul which Christianity wins by its power, in every age, land, nation, and class, is united by the Holy Ghost to Jesus Christ, its spiritual Head; and is accordingly knit to every other believing soul, in the unity of a common life and a common love. The bonds of this union, too, being spiritual, are indissoluble for ever; they are not touched even by death; and the church, which cannot be severed from its living Head, is one both in heaven and upon earth. Do the bonds of humanitarian brotherhood stretch in like manner over the abyss of death, linking the living and the dead in a community that survives all the changes of time? And since Christ is constituted the Head of principalities and powers; and since, by the extension of that grace of which He is the Author, angels and cherubim are gathered, with redeemed saints, into His glorified church above, can the humanitarian scheme better heal the schism which sin has made in the universe, and bring the pure in all worlds together, in the fellowship of a common joy and a common life for ever? If brotherhood be the aim that religion must accomplish,

give us this—the brotherhood of the universal church, embracing all generations of the living and the dead, and folding within its arms those elder sons of God who never sinned. Unto God, therefore, be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end!

2. *The Church uses no instrument but the truth, and strikes directly at sin as the root of all evil.* Being herself the product of grace, she is entrusted with the oracles in which it is revealed. Her office is to proclaim and to expound the truth, and her power is the greater because it is spiritual. Her empire is over the thoughts and opinions of men, and she is seated upon the throne of their affections. Let it be remembered too, that the truth which she proclaims does not rest upon the authority of human discovery, of which the evidence is only more or less probable; but it is truth absolute and certain, resting upon the authority of a Divine revelation. It is truth directly from God, and partakes of the authority of law, from whose commanding power the conscience is not able to escape. It is truth given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, which He renders instinct with life, and promises to accompany with almighty efficacy wherever it is proclaimed. It follows inevitably, that the power of the Church is immense wherever she gains a foothold. Her triumph is complete, as soon as it is achieved at all. “The weapons of her warfare are not carnal;” and for that reason they “are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”

As a reforming agency, the church addresses herself at once to the source of all evil as found in the corruption of nature itself. The cure which she attempts is radical; not to alleviate the symptoms, but to eradicate the disease. She deals directly with sin, as such; showing how we may be delivered both from its guilt and power. Her aim is nothing less than to dry up the fountain of depravity within—to

destroy the very being of sin in the soul ; and thus, in the most effectual manner, to cut off all the manifestations of it in the conduct and life. She strikes at the vices and crimes of men, by seeking to remove their cause. She is not satisfied with reformation, but with renovation. She directs attention to the Lord Jesus, who takes away the guilt of sin ; and to the Holy Ghost, who destroys its dominion and presence. She insists upon holiness not less than pardon, and covers both in the offer of salvation to lost men. Of course, where one is “made a new creature in Christ Jesus,” all the moral virtues of temperance, chastity, benevolence and the like will come forth as fruits of the spiritual life ; and they will flourish, as graces of the spirit, in exact proportion with the development of that life in advancing holiness.

I am exceedingly jealous for the honour of the church as the Divinely appointed institute for the regeneration of society. Laudable as the motives may be which lead us to attack special forms of vice, and charitable as the disposition is which constructs agencies for the relief of suffering and want, these fail utterly to probe the sores which fasten upon our social system. They have no power—scarcely an existence, save where the Church goes before in her errand of healing ; the life they exhibit is that of the parasite drawn from the trunk to which it clings ; and they show a fatal tendency to that very corruption which they seek to mend. If others have a faith in these nostrums greater than I am able to command, I am silent, so long as the attempt is not made to glorify them as the panaceas for human guilt, or to substitute their agency for that of the church, or to lessen confidence in her as the true and only reliable instrument for the reformation of morals. What influence can be compared with that of Divine truth ? What life equal to that which is breathed into us by the Quickener Himself ? What reform parallel with the new birth of a sinner ? and what victory over vice equal to the extermination of the very being of sin ? “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it ;” so

the promise of all blessing is in the Church, the pillar and ground of the truth, the exponent of that grace by which alone the power of sin can ever be broken upon earth.

3. *The Church lays hold upon the original source of influence and power in the family.* This topic is rich in its suggestions ; which, however, must not retard the rapid progress of this discourse to its close. The family, of course, is the root from which all human relations spring. It is the *first society*, constituted immediately by God, out of which the State and the Church, the only other Divinely appointed societies, are in due time evolved. The influences which operate in this sphere are the most controlling, because they begin at the dawn of our being, when human nature is most plastic, and because they give the first shape into which individual character is cast. It is, then, precisely here that religion places herself, at the fountain of individual existence, in creating the church in the bosom of the family. Three times in human history this has been done. At the creation, the family started as the church, in which the first Father was a priest ; out of which the whole patriarchal economy was developed, with this as its characteristic feature. When, after the deluge, Noah offered sacrifices for his combined household, the church re-appears in the family. And in the fulness of times, when the Church burst the envelope of Judaism, and took its final form, it was again founded in the house, and sanctified as before all the domestic ties. In the very constitution and ordinances of the Redeemer's church, the family relation is recognized as the ground upon which our children stand by birth included within the pale of the covenant.

God has been pleased, moreover, in the scheme of grace, to appropriate the terms of Father and Son, to indicate the relations subsisting betwixt Himself and the redeemed ; if, indeed, the paternal relation which He sustains is not rather to be considered the original from which it has been derived to human fatherhood as its expressive type. Adoption, too, is the generic term which covers the whole method

of our salvation ; which lifts us out of the cold and distant relation of mere subjects under the law, and exalts us to the privilege of such communion as only a son has with a loving father.

The spiritual idea of a family is still that of a church, where all under its authority are taught to know God, and are led in its daily and united devotions to engage in His solemn worship. As I look down from this pulpit upon the great congregation, it appears to my thought not the aggregation of individual persons, but as a church of churches, the collection of many family churches in a higher unity ; and the only consideration which has ever reconciled me to our pew system, with its many disadvantages, is that it presents each family church by itself in the sanctuary, just as it gathers, morning and evening, around the domestic altar. I have sometimes wondered, too, whether in Heaven we will not be grouped as families around the throne ; families swelling into tribes, as the blessing has come down through a long line of pious ancestors, all of whom will be gathered with their godly descendants, to praise the faithfulness of Him who has fulfilled the covenant promise, "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee in their generations." If on this memorial day it is pleasant to you to recall the faith and worship of those who have slept in their sepulchres for more than half a century, what will be the joy of the common fellowship when you worship together in the upper temple, and embalm those sanctified memories in songs of praise ? What an instrument of power must the church be, whose constant home is in the family, presiding over every birth, dropping its benediction upon the cradle of infancy, consecrating parental discipline into the representative of God's authority, and parental care into the shadow of God's providence ; beautifying a mother's love, as it nurses a soul for God, mingling all duty with the sweetest affections of the heart. Oh ! it is so like God to hallow our home with the glory of his presence, and to sanctify human love as the vehicle of His own blessing !

4. If the Church be an agency of such power, *its administration is equally safe, by reason of the guards thrown around it.* Examine this point with a little attention. The church is a purely spiritual body. "My kingdom," says the Saviour, "is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is my kingdom not from hence." It is spiritual in its nature, in its subjects, in its ordinances, and in its end. It is bound in allegiance to an invisible Head. It is therefore independent of all governments among men, moving in the midst of them all, and penetrating each with its quiet influence, yet forbidden to form alliance with any. Its jurisdiction is so fundamentally distinct that any fusion into the state, or any alliance with the civil power, works confusion and ultimate destruction to both. The church is therefore singularly adapted to universal extension. Separated by her peculiar organization from every form of State rule, she may co-exist with it everywhere, without necessarily joining against the authority which is so distinct from her own. So long as she keeps within her proper sphere, in her universal diffusion she may unite the dismembered nations in a blessed and solid unity, without disturbing the internal relations necessary to the individuality of each.

Again: the church possesses a fixed constitution and an eternal King. There are no changes of dynasty, and no questions of succession to perplex its history. There are no improvements to be foisted upon its government, by which it becomes gradually perverted from its original design. As its King lives for ever without successors, so its constitution is unalterably ordained, and its policy is steady from age to age. This permanency of the church gives to its subjects a feeling of security and repose, in marked contrast with the disquiet engendered by a fickle diplomacy in the kingdoms of earth.

Still further: the administration of its affairs is committed to officers whose appointment depends upon a Divine call,

but is determined by the free choice of those who are brought under their control. The power with which they are entrusted is purely ministerial and executive, not delegated to them as individuals, but only as formed into courts; and this joint power is wielded under the sanction of an organic law, to which every decision must be referred for its binding authority. These courts, moreover, are so graduated, that by an untrammelled right of appeal, the collective wisdom of the whole body may be brought to bear upon any single case. One must be blind indeed not to perceive the safeguards which are furnished in checks and balances so nicely contrived, rendering the agency which is the most efficient for accomplishing God's purposes at the same time the safest for man. Its power, indeed, can be abused; but only by the overthrow of principles that are essential to its order, which indicates at once the nature of the remedy, and where it should be applied. Surely, none who have intelligence to see the wisdom displayed in the constitution of the church, will hesitate to accept her as the best instrument to reform the world; and none who are penetrated with reverence for the Divine authority, will yield to systems which usurp her province.

5. *The final proof of the value of the Church as a working agency is found in the Holy Spirit's abode within her.* This thought has been presented in another connection. I refer to it here only as heightening our conception of her efficiency. No other society upon earth can claim her distinction of being quickened by the perpetual presence and energy of the immediate author of life to the whole universe. In her collective unity, she is "the body of Christ," knit to Him by the faith which the Holy Ghost implants, and, therefore, instinct with the life which is treasured in Him, In His departure from earth, His personal absence is compensated by the descent and presence of the Holy Spirit, with the promise that He would abide with her for ever. The blessed Comforter, therefore, dwells in the church, as "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and

might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord." He presides over her deliberations, gives efficiency to her plans, and crowns her with the glory of triumph at last. In a word, nothing can more fully express her value than the estimate put upon her by the Deity, as being the outward realization of the work of redemption by Christ, and of the new life wrought in the soul by the Holy Ghost. She is of such prime importance in the estimation of God, that the whole administration of Providence is committed to the Mediator, with reference to the ends to be accomplished in her. If thus integrated into the scheme of salvation, if thus placed in the centre of all history, with the entire providential control of nations turning upon her as the pivot, she is exalted to queenly majesty, and challenges the reverence and loyalty of all mankind.

I have now, my hearers, compassed the theme—alas! too imperfectly—which I announced in the beginning. It seemed a virtuous effort so to employ the associations of this place, and of this day, as to enlarge your views of the Redeemer's church upon earth. The trust discharged by your pious ancestors, in erecting a temple to Jehovah on this hallowed spot, is now devolved upon you their pious descendants. Let it be yours to transmit a pure faith and the memory of a godly life to those who shall come after. May this venerable church, which for a hundred years has thrown out the light of a pure gospel upon the surrounding lands, abide through all the centuries, until the Lord shall appear in the glory of His second advent! May generations yet unborn be trained within these sacred walls for honour and immortality! In the joy of the resurrection may the sleepers in these tombs resume the praises they once chanted on this holy spot, and thus welcome their descending Lord! And may we all, in the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, know the blessedness of that worship of which the chorus shall always be, "*Now unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.* AMEN."