

THE
SPIRITUAL STEWARD.

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A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED

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P R E F A C E.

THE following discourse, with a very few additions and alterations, makes its appearance from the press precisely as it was delivered from the pulpit. It would be vanity the most inexcusable in the Author, to affect throwing any light on the duties of the ministerial office, which have been so frequently and so fully discussed by persons of maturer age, of greater experience, and whose situation in life opens larger sources of information on this and every other subject. In the providence of God he was called to preach on that public occasion; and at the repeated request of some, whose judgment he ought to respect, he ventures the sermon to the world. The author trusts, that it may occasionally serve at least as a monitor to himself, and through the blessing of that sovereign God, who makes foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty, may not be altogether unprofitable to fellow laborers in the vineyard of Jehovah.

All who are in the least degree versed in the history of the church; who are acquainted with her

prosperities and adversities, and the causes which produced them, must be impressed with the unutterable importance of her ministry. On the prudence of the ambassadors of Jesus, their patience, their self-denial, their fervent zeal, their deep acquaintance with the mysteries of the kingdom, and their holy heroism in defending them, depend intimately, under God, the success and the glory of christianity. They are in scripture emphatically represented under the emblem of stars ; and if they are obscured, either by ignorance or error, a general darkness must envelope the horizon of the church. Natural talents and human learning are little noticed in the following character of the gospel steward ; because however important these qualifications are, they are of inferior importance ; they become useful and ornamental, precisely in proportion as they are sanctified by the spirit of Jesus, and consecrated to the service of his cross. If those who bear the vessels of the Lord be erroneous, the more successful they are, the more dangerous, by rendering others tenfold more the children of darkness than formerly. If they appear indolent and indifferent, their example fosters carelessness in their hearers, and tends to lull them deeper and deeper in the slumbers of perdition. The ordinary Pastor, no less than the extraordinary Apostle, should he possess all knowledge and all mysteries,

yet, without charity, must become *as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal*. Intellectual endowments, unaccompanied by divine grace, like the blazing comet, may dazzle and astonish, while he who endures all things for the elect's sake, like the sun in the firmament, exhilarates and cherishes as he shines.

If the present discourse is made instrumental, in impressing a single ambassador of Jesus with more becoming conceptions of the importance of his office, or of awakening one to greater industry, greater importunity in discharging the duties of his office, the author will consider himself more than rewarded; and would now, and eternally, ascribe all to the glory of that sovereignty, which out of *the mouth of babes and sucklings* has perfected strength.

SALEM, December 24, 1802.

THE
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I COR. iv. 1.—“*Stewards of the mysteries of God.*”

THE grace and sovereignty of Jehovah illustriously shine in our redemption, through the cross of Immanuel. It is a manifestation of grace the most marvellous, the most glorious, that any of our family should be restored; that after our wilful apostacy from the government of God, and rebellion against his crown, we should be reinstated in his favor, dignified with the name and distinguished with the inheritance of sons. It excites admiration in the highest, that our recovery should be accomplished by a plan so peculiar, a scheme so costly, as the substitution and death of his *only begotten*, eternally beloved Son. “*Herein is love: Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*”

Sovereignty also mingles her glories with those of grace, in every part of this wondrous dispensation. While grace displays her exceeding riches

in the salvation of any, sovereignty shines mysterious and awful in determining the objects of this salvation ; in choosing some to adoption, to reconciliation, to eternal life ; while others of the same nation, of the same society, of the same family, under the same opportunities of instruction, under the same offers of mercy, are utterly passed by ; are delivered up to *blindness of mind, hardness of heart*, to a rejection of Jesus, the only sacrifice for sin, as a pledge of eternal condemnation hereafter.

Jehovah appears no less an adorable sovereign, in the very instruments by whom this redemption is applied to *the election of grace*. Whom does he usually raise up and employ for this important purpose ? Does he fasten upon the unfinning angels, those exalted spirits who bask in the glories of his throne, whose larger capacities qualify them for understanding more fully, and unfolding more perfectly, the mysteries of redemption ? No ; their apostate tribes are not chosen to be the blessed partakers of this salvation ; neither are their unfinning tribes honored to be instrumental in applying it. What rank of the human *family* is ordinarily employed for promoting the kingdom of *Jesus*, and applying to the souls of others the reconciliation of his cross ? Does the living God raise up some preternatural order, persons superior to their fellow-creatures, naturally distinguished by purer morals,

by a more comprehensive understanding or commanding utterance? No; was this the plan pursued by the Eternal, the success of his gospel would probably be ascribed to the excellence of the instruments employed. The vessel naturally most frail, most foul, debased by every species of open and gross abomination, has frequently been purified, and appointed to contain this immortal treasure. “*Base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, that no flesh should glory in his presence.*” He ordinarily uses instruments the most insignificant, seemingly the most unequal to the work, that his own wisdom, and power, and sovereignty, may more visibly be traced in every part of the dispensation. A few fishermen, persons of low occupation in life, unlearned in the sciences, and unskilled in the policies of this world, were selected as the usual companions of our Lord; and their preaching, afterwards, was the great engine of spreading his gospel among the nations of the earth. Saul, once a malignant *persecutor*, a man injurious to the Redeemer’s cause, who had uttered the foulest blasphemies against the Saviour’s cross; this very Saul is converted and rendered the chief apostle of this very cross; glories in it as his only salvation; proclaims it as the only hope of perishing sinners. “*We have this treasure,*” he exclaims, adoring equally the depth of divine condescension

and sovereignty—" *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are stewards of the mysteries of God.*"

The term *mysteries*, here used by the apostle, occurs very frequently in the volume of divine inspiration. Without enquiring particularly into its real origin, or usual signification, it may be sufficient to remark, that *mysteries*, as employed in the sacred oracles, generally imply those truths which our reason, unassisted by revelation, could never have discovered ; and which, after they are revealed, our finite, contracted understandings, are incapable fully to comprehend. The mysteries committed to the ministers of reconciliation, simply imply the everlasting gospel ; all those doctrines, all that discipline ; those seals of the covenant also, which are employed by the adorable head of the church, for the instruction, the correction and edification of his spiritual household.

The persons entrusted with these mysteries are denominated *stewards*. There is an evident allusion to a practice which prevailed in early periods of the world ; particularly in the families of the opulent and honorable. A person of known integrity and talents was chosen, to whom, under the char-

after of a *steward*, the proprietor of the house committed the immediate disposal of his goods, and management of his family ; accountable, however, in all respects, to him by whom he was appointed to this stewardship. We read in sacred history, of a steward in the family of Abraham, in the family of Joseph, in the families of particular kings of Israel and Chaldea. This character is frequently applied to the ministers of reconciliation, and expresses the great importance and awful responsibility of their office. By Jesus Jehovah, the supreme Ruler and Lawgiver of the divine house, they are now entrusted with the treasure of the gospel. This they are required to dispense to his family on earth, as they must answer hereafter, *at his appearing and kingdom.*

The pertinency of ~~this~~ subject to the present occasion, is abundantly obvious. We are ordinarily employed in illustrating and enforcing the duty of others, as men : It is more appropriate, at present, to illustrate and apply our own obligations as ministers. May the unction of the Holy One liberally descend, and influence every heart, while we attempt—

I. To enumerate a few of those mysteries which are contained in the gospel : And,

II. Illustrate the character and obligations of those to whom these mysteries are entrusted : *Stewards*—Stewards of the mysteries of God.

1. The Trinity in Jehovah, may be numbered among the mysteries of the gospel : Three adorable persons, necessarily, essentially, eternally *equal* ;—*ONE* in essence, *ONE* in perfection and glory. This doctrine was revealed obscurely in the Old Testament ; but is taught with greater perspicuity and glory in the New. The apostle speaks of “ *the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*” An evangelist announces, that “ *there be Three which bare record in heaven ; the Father, and the Word, and the Holy Ghost : These Three are One.*” This truth is taught, not barely as a subject of speculation to the understanding, but a source of rich, unutterable consolation to the heart. The believer in Jesus is privileged to enjoy real, distinct communion with each of the adorable Three ; with the Father in his love ; with the Son in his grace ; with the Holy Ghost in his sanctifying, comforting influences. It constitutes the privilege, and security, and glory, of each heir of salvation, that he is “ *elected according to the foreknowledge of God, the Father, through sanctification of the spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ ;*” and that once elected, and sanctified, and justified, he shall be infallibly and everlastingly glorified.

2. The incarnation of the eternal Son, is another mystery of the ever glorious gospel. "*Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God manifested in the flesh.*" His assumption of our nature, appropriating our guilt, suffering in our room, bringing in everlasting righteousness for our reconciliation, forms an essential, a most interesting part of that heavenly treasure committed to our trust; and ought to constitute *the Alpha and Omega* of every administration, whether public or private.—From Jesus and his cross, all the revelation of God derives its meaning, its value and glory. There the law of Moses, with its costly observances, the predictions of prophets, and the preaching of apostles, all meet, as their common centre. For Messiah's appearance in the flesh, and his accomplishment of our redemption, believers under the Old Testament looked forward with anxious expectation; and to these events, the ransomed, through eternity, will look back with adoring gratitude: They will be ever acknowledging this *decease, accomplished at Jerusalem*, as the foundation of all they expected on earth, and all they experience in heaven. In Christ, and him crucified, all the perfections of Deity are glorified to the very uttermost: The law is magnified in its precept, vindicated in its penalty; the injuries of justice repaired; the offence of holiness removed; while mercy, grace and condescension

shine with unparalleled lustre. Through Christ, and him crucified, all the wants of the sinner are supplied. By the blood of his covenant, sprinkled upon the conscience, the vilest of the vile *are purged from dead works*. Through his righteousness imputed, they are completely and eternally justified in the sight of Jehovah ; and by his grace, shed abroad through their hearts, they are sanctified and prepared for the inheritance of immortality. So important, so glorious is this mystery, the Son of God incarnate, and suffering for our sins, that patriarchs *rejoiced*, leaped up, *to see his day afar off* ; prophets enquired diligently, who *testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow* ; apostles determined to know *nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified* ; angels look into it, with ever new, ever increasing admiration.

3. The regeneration and sanctification of the sinner, by the eternal Spirit, is another mystery, with which, as stewards in the family of Jesus, we are entrusted. The apostle, therefore, pronounces it not only a *mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh*, but *believed on in the world*, and speaks in another epistle of the *mystery of faith*. This grace, which unites the sinner to the Saviour, and interests him in the *great salvation*, is effected in a manner utterly inconceivable to us. Although the

change produced in the soul, at its translation from death to life, is abundantly obvious ; new fears, new desires, new joys, new hopes, instantly spring up ; yet the manner by which this change is produced is altogether mysterious, utterly unsearchable by us. “ *The wind bloweth where it listeth ; we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” Who can conceive or describe that gracious influence, by which the understanding, once dark, is now enlightened ; the will once stubborn, is now subdued to the obedience of faith ; the affections, formerly sensual and earthly, are now elevated to things spiritual and divine ; the whole man transformed, translated from death to life, from corruption to holiness, from things temporal to things eternal. The believer himself, although the favored subject of this sanctifying Spirit, is unable to trace the manner of his operations. He can, however, maintain, and maintain with a confidence which all the sophistry of earth or hell shall never be able to overthrow, “ *whereas I was blind, now I see.*” I discover new excellencies and glories in the Saviour, new wisdom and condescension in the method of reconciliation through his obedience and cross, new sweetness and preciousness in the promises, new suitableness and sufficiency in

the everlasting covenant. These are *all my salvation, and all my desire.*

4. To these we may add, the resurrection of the body; the awards of the general judgment; the adjudication of the righteous to endless life, of the wicked to endless perdition; as other mysteries of the gospel committed to our charge. The manner by which the resurrection from the dead will be effected; the particular body in which they shall appear; the part of the universe where all the nations, when raised, shall be placed; the procedure of the great Judge in determining their unalterable doom; the instrumentality of elect angels in raising the dead, in arranging them for judgment, in conducting the righteous to mansions of bliss, and hurrying the damned to their gloomy abodes, are inconceivable to us. "*Behold,*" says the apostle, "*behold I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep; but we shall be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed: For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*"

These are a part of those mysteries, with which, as stewards of the kingdom, we are solemnly entrusted. These it becomes us to dispense,

without reserve, without partiality, without hypocrisy, to that house over which *the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers.*

Having attempted briefly to enumerate these mysteries, we proceed—

II. To illustrate the character and obligation of those to whom they are committed: *Stewards—Stewards of the mysteries of God.*

1. The steward is freely elected and appointed by the proprietor of the house. He who daringly rushes into the family of another, and takes possession of his property without a regular invitation, is chargeable equally with presumption and folly. He can neither ask the present support of his master, nor afterwards expect a reward from his hand. Equally necessary is it that the minister of reconciliation be divinely chosen to that office; that he be duly called by Jesus Jehovah, the great master of the spiritual house. No emergence of the church, however peculiar; no necessity for laborers, however pressing; no advantages arising from natural talents, from the aids of education, or other considerations, can justify any in assuming the ministerial office, unless lawfully called. The sovereign Lord

of the house, jealous of his royal prerogatives, meets the intruder with that heart rending challenge—" *Who hath required this at your hand ?*" and writes his presumption in his punishment—" *I have not sent him, nor commanded him : Therefore he shall not profit this people at all. No man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*" Let us pause a moment, and impartially enquire—Are we sent and appointed of the Lord God to this stewardship? Have we been careful to make *sure* our calling and election, not only as men, but as ministers? This question intimately concerns the glory of that Jesus whom we serve; the dignity of that cause in which we are embarked; the edification of that church which we are appointed to oversee; our own peace, and confidence, and triumph, as individuals. How would it support in the hour of difficulty; how would it embolden in the discharge of every duty, could we carry our commission in our hand, and with the prophet confidently proclaim—" *The Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me.*" Then might we daily look up to our master, for strength proportioned to our daily cross, and expect his blessing on those labors which we perform in obedience to his command.

A full, formal enquiry, into the nature of this call to the ministerial office, is not intended at pres-

ent. It may not, however, be impertinent to remark, that he who is divinely chosen to this work, will experience the love of Jehovah the Redeemer, kindling in his heart. He will feel this heavenly flame burning up the dross of self-ease, self-interest, self-promotion. He will be constrained by a holy, an irresistible necessity, *to preach the gospel ; to spend, and to be spent ;* to occupy his time, his talents, in promoting the kingdom of that Jesus who bought us with his blood. His bosom will occasionally melt with tender compassion towards his brethren, by nature, who are in danger of perishing eternally. He will cheerfully renounce each worldly prospect, his temporal ease and indulgence, nay, life itself, to become instrumental in rescuing them from never ending ruin. Animated with the same spirit, he will burst forth in the exclamation of the great apostle—“ *I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.*”

2. The steward acting agreeably to his station, aims at adapting himself to the varied circumstances of the household. He endeavors to dispense that portion which is most suited to their peculiar age and necessities. This will equally be the concern of each steward in the heavenly family, who has imbibed the spirit of his office. This is called in scrip-

ture, “ *rightly dividing the word of truth ; giving to every one their portion of meat in due season ;* ” and may with propriety be pronounced the most difficult part of ministerial duty. Much diligence is requisite for knowing the state of *our flock* ; and much discernment for accommodating our public administrations to their respective capacities. Some are ignorant, and require instruction ; others are secure, and ought to be alarmed ; others are presumptuous, and require to be shaken from their unscriptural confidences. The weak need to be strengthened ; the wavering to be confirmed ; the wandering to be restored ; the fearful to be emboldened ; the drooping to be supported, with the consolations of the covenant.

Could no other argument be adduced, this abundantly evinces the propriety of a stationary ministry, and of each minister familiarly visiting and conversing with his flock. The physician must examine his patient, before he can administer his medicine with judgment : The vine-dresser must go from tree to tree, before he knows whether to dig around and dung, or with a pruning-knife to lop off the exuberant branch : The teacher must enquire into the age of the scholar, his ability, his progress in learning, before he can judiciously direct his future studies. Thus he who would approve himself faithful

to his adorable master, or become successful in the salvation of souls, must diligently, must painfully enquire into their ~~scriptural~~ condition.

spiritual

Bear with me, respected Fathers and Brethren, if I take the liberty of enlarging on this duty ; because it is scarcely more important than unfashionable ; and probably the languor of living godliness in our churches, the rare instances of conversion under our administrations, may be ascribed partly, if not principally, to this neglect. We are not capable rightly to divide the word of truth ; to dispense in public the mysteries of the kingdom, according to the circumstances of the family ; because we are not more employed in private conversing with the family, enquiring into their various exercises, their anxieties, their doubts, their discouragements.—Consequences the most glorious attended the revival of this primitive practice in Geneva, under the ministry of Calvin, and in various other places, at the commencement of the reformation. While ministers, with their ruling elders, industriously went around from house to house ; while they carried their appeal immediately to the sinner's conscience, *teaching every man, and warning every man*, their labors became eminently successful : The ignorant were instructed ; the secure alarmed ; the weak, the despondent, strengthened and edified.

3. The steward endeavors to manifest forbearance with the members of the house. Concern for the interests of his lord, induces him to exercise patience, not only with the weakness, but even the wickedness of those committed to his charge. A disposition, this, of difficult attainment ; yet indispensibly requisite in the minister of reconciliation. Numerous insults, much derision, must be expected. Those who are at ease will frequently deride our admonitions as impertinent ; as only calculated to ruffle their repose. The drunkard will revile us as unnecessarily precise ; as unfriendly to human happiness. The impure will attempt justifying themselves, by the backslidings of Lot, of David, and other eminent saints. The swearer will probably reward our rebukes with replying, that he intended no evil, or that he injured none but himself. All this insult must be expected ; all this, out of compassion to precious, perishing souls, ought patiently to be endured. Although the drowning man does not immediately seize the rope thrown out for his relief ; yet a concern for his preservation would oblige to continue the offer. Although the man conflicting with some malignant disease, through ignorance, may reject the medicine when administered ; yet a regard for his recovery will constrain to repeat the application. Rather, infinitely rather, should we patiently persevere with sinners, when their fate

vation or damnation for eternity are at stake. "*The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all ; apt to teach ; patient in meekness ; instructing those that oppose themselves ; if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth.*" "*Reprove, rebuke, exhort,*" is the apostolic injunction, "*with all long-suffering and doctrine.*"—Our feelings may rather be injured for a time, than their souls damned for eternity. Besides, the *conversion of sinners* so obstinate, constitutes our noblest triumphs ; it excites in the spirits of the just the loudest hallelujahs now, and will form the brightest jewels in our crown hereafter. Noble, in this respect, worthy our imitation, was the conduct of the apostles of the Lamb—" *Being reviled, we bless ; being persecuted, we suffer it ; being defamed, we intreat ; lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*"

But this forbearance is not necessary barely towards the unprincipled and profligate ; there is equal necessity of exercising it towards the living members of the body of Christ. As in the family of nature, so in the family of grace, there is an almost infinite variety of disposition. Much imperfection adheres to the best, arising partly from ignorance, partly from prejudices of education, and custom ; partly from the remains of a legal spirit, and various other causes ; and a concern for their edification calls loudly for the exercise of prudence

and patience. It is probably to this yielding, accommodating disposition, the apostle alludes in the following passage :—“ *Unto the Jew, I became as a Jew ; that I might gain the Jew. To the weak, I became as weak ; that I might gain the weak. I am made all things to all men ; that I might by all means save some.*”

4. The steward is in all respects responsible to him by whom he was called to the office. He is answerable for every part of his conduct ; not only for the disposition of his master's goods, but also for his behaviour towards the members of the house. An impression of our responsibility as officers in the family of Jesus, ought to reign supreme in our hearts, and rouse to the most diligent discharge of every duty. It is the polar star, to which every administration, both public and private, ought unvaryingly to centre. The great ruler of the house, in committing the treasure to his different stewards, positively commands, “ *Occupy until I come ;*” when the reckoning will be required. While this consideration calls to unwearied diligence in discharging the duties of our high vocation, it also requires the most rigid impartiality in dispensing the mysteries of the kingdom. Solemn, awful consideration ! For each distribution of this sacred provision ; for every admission to, or exclu-

sion from, the privileges of the house, we must give account to HIM, *whose eyes are as a flame of fire* ; who is now our omniscient witness ; who will shortly appear as our impartial Judge, and *render to every man according to his work*. This all-solemn reflection did the great God, our Saviour, frequently revive in the minds of his apostles ; and by it admonished them to unwearied industry and zeal in his service. “ *Behold I come quickly : Hold fast that which thou hast. Watch ye, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord cometh. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.*” This awful reflection did the great apostle urge powerfully on Timothy, his son ; and through him on the servants of the cross, in every succeeding age : “ *I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and kingdom ; preach the word ; do the work of an evangelist ; make full proof of thy ministry.*”

5. The steward naturally expects a suitable reward for his services. He looks up to the proprietor of the house for an honorable compensation. In this respect, our divinely gracious master has given the stewards in his family the most abundant

soul-supporting encouragement. While he forewarned us, without reserve, of all the pain, the poverty, the reproach, the persecution, which might be expected; that we should be *hated of all men for his name's sake*; despised by the gay, as gloomy and melancholy; ridiculed by the worldly wise, as ignorant and enthusiastic; reproached by the great, as mean and contemptible; disdained by the carnally secure, as disturbing the peace of society, as *turning the world upside down*; he encourages, amidst all this contempt, with the prospect of an *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. "*There is no man, that hath forsaken,*" is his own declaration; a declaration, full of condescension on his part—full of consolation on ours: "*There is no man, that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or lands, for my sake and the gospel, but he shall receive an hundred fold; now, in the present time, with persecutions; and in the world to come, eternal life.*" Does our profession expose to outward poverty? He promises in recompensation his own *unsearchable riches*. Are we called to take up our cross? This will shortly be succeeded by a crown incorruptible. Does our master call to unwearied diligence, to be *instant in season and out of season*? This shall be rewarded by an eternity of ease and enjoyment. "*They shall rest from their labors. To him that overcometh, I will give to sit down with me on my throne.*" How did the soul

of the great apostle swell beyond the chains of persecution, and rise superior to all opposition, while he contemplated that glory which was afterwards to be revealed. This prospect seemingly softened the rigors of fatigue, gilded the gloom of the dungeon, blunted the edge of the sword, quenched the violence of flames, and brightened with the light of heaven the dark vale and shadow of death. “None of these things trouble me;” not all that their ingenuity can devise, or their power perpetrate: “Neither hold I my life dear; that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to declare the grace of God. If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.” Equal to the bold, dignified challenges of his life, were the triumphs of his dying hour. “I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure is at hand.”

Compared with these, how base, how contemptible, have been the last expressions of those admired as heroes, as poets, as philosophers; of those who by their valour have risen to empire, or by the efforts of genius have borne away the palm of literary fame. “I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of right-

cousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing."

The application suggested by this doctrine, is equally obvious and interesting.

1. Since the gospel of Jehovah is a mystery, its neglect or opposition, by an ungodly age, and even by the worldly wise* of that age, is cause, neither of surprise, nor discouragement. "The preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness." "Christ crucified," in every period of the world, has been to many, "a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence ; the favour of death unto death." The reason is obvious. The human un-

* The author, by no means, acknowledges, that the preponderancy of natural talents, or acquired learning, is, or has been, on the side of infidelity ; because the contrary is fact. The living God, in righteous sovereignty, may suffer many, who are carnally wise, to become ~~stupid~~ fools ; yet in different ages, I may add, in every age, ^{spiritual} some who have ascended the very summit of literary eminence, have believed, and advocated our holy religion. Christianity can number among her sons, a Grotius, a Newton, a Boyle, a Bacon, a Locke, a Milton, an Addison ; who, for every accomplishment, both natural and acquired, may be pronounced the brightest ornaments of human nature. These illustrious men, although they entertained different sentiments respecting particular doctrines of scripture, yet cordially concurred in receiving it as a revelation from heaven, and in recommending it as worthy of all acceptance. Even in our

derstanding is naturally blind, and cannot, of itself, discover his excellence or glory. The man without eyes, cannot discern the light of the sun, or admire the beauty of colours : He who is destitute of hearing, cannot be charmed with the melodies of music : Having lost the sense of smelling, he is incapable of relishing the fragrance of the rose. As in natural, in spiritual* things also, senses must be possessed, suitable to the objects to be discerned. " The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God : They are foolishness unto him : Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Whatever diversity may appear

own age, which a noted blasphemer† of the Saviour's cross has complimented as the *age of reason*, hundreds can be found, naturally as rational as himself, and whose reason has not been prostituted by foul intoxication, who believe that all scripture is given by inspiration of God ; who have meekness and modesty enough to sit at the feet of Jesus, and adore those mysteries of his gospel, which they are unable fully to comprehend.

† The allusion to Thomas Paine, the author of the " Age of Reason," is too obvious to require explanation. I shall, therefore, transcribe the very words of a masterly defender of the Christian faith, respecting that retailer of infidelity. " As to Paine, he is well known to have been a profane swearer and drunkard. We have evidence upon oath, that religion was his favorite topic when intoxicated."

Fuller's Gospel its own Witness.—Conduct of believers and unbelievers.—Page 98.

among men naturally, some possessing lesser, others larger capacities ; whatever difference may arise from the advantages of education ; in spiritual things all are equally blind, until enlightened by Jehovah the Spirit. “ For it is written—“ I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” “ Where is the wise man ? Where is the scribe ? Where is the disputer of this world ? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ?” True it is, eminence of natural genius, improved by liberal learning, and sanctified by the spirit of wisdom, give an immense superiority. Possessed of such qualifications, the man is capable of searching more thoroughly the mysteries of redemption ; of pointing out their consistence with the divine character and government ; of arranging their doctrines, and silencing the cavils of unbelievers. But first he must *learn of the Father* : Like a star of larger size, he may shine with superior lustre ; but he himself must first be enlightened by *the Sun of Righteousness*.

2. We learn from this passage, what are those truths which ought principally to occupy our attention ; which should constitute the great theme of our private studies, and public administration ; the plain, peculiar doctrines of the cross ; the simple

truths of revelation ; neither recommended by human wisdom, nor accommodated to human prejudice or corruption. We are appointed stewards, not of the learning of the schools ; not of the discoveries of philosophy ; not of the charms of moral speculation ; but *of the mysteries of God*. These it becomes us humbly to improve, as sinners, that require a free salvation. These it becomes us to dispense, with all simplicity, to that household over which “ the Holy-Ghost hath made us overseers.” This is the provision, which the glorious proprietor hath committed to our trust : And to be addressing our hearers with harangues merely moral, with refined sentiments, or learned speculations, would be to offer *husks*, or *stubble*, or *straw*, while in our *Father’s house* is bread immortal and divine. These observations, however familiar, cannot be too frequently realised : They were, perhaps, never more important, nor more seasonable, than in the age in which we live. There is an uncommon affectation, at present, to fashion the gospel of Jesus after the wisdom of the world. Is not natural religion frequently recommended, to the degradation of revealed ? Are not virtue, morality, good-will to all, lavishly extolled ; while the cardinal doctrines, of peace with God, through the cross of Immanuel ; justification, through his eternal righteousness ; regeneration and sanctification, by the efficacy of his

grace, are overlooked, if not rejected? A late writer, with more hardihood than usual, has ascribed the alarming progress of infidelity to the preaching of the peculiar doctrines of christianity. On this assertion, suffice it to remark, that the discovery has been made since the age of the apostles, and is taught by another inspiration than the Holy-Ghost. They spake "the wisdom of God in a mystery:" They "determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified:" They preached not in "the enticing words of man's wisdom; lest the cross of Christ should become of none effect;" but in the "words which the Holy-Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual." And the fact is too notorious to be denied, that when their successors endeavored to recommend themselves, by blending philosophy with divinity; the gospel of Jesus with the learning of the schools; purity of doctrine degenerated in the church,* and living godliness languished in the heart. The experiment is equally

* The author takes the liberty of inserting the following remark, of the very learned and judicious Dr. Owen; and the remark is the more entitled to our attention, as it is founded upon undeniable fact. In his history of the heresies which early reproached the church, and the causes which produced them, he adds—"The pretended defence of truth, with arts and arms of another kind than the simple application of scripture, has been the bane of religion, and lost the peace of christians beyond re-

blasphemous and vain, to attempt amending the wisdom of Jehovah by the wisdom of mortals. Emboldened, therefore, by apostolic example, and encouraged by apostolic success, let us determine to rejoice in nothing as men, to proclaim nothing as ministers, but *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; to

covery; and it may be observed, that whilst this way alone, the use of scripture for the preservation of truth, was insisted on, that although innumerable heresies arose one after another, they never made any great progress, nor attained unto any such consistency as to make a stated opposition to the truth; but the errors themselves, and their authors, were as vagrant meteors, which appeared a little and vanished away. Afterwards it was not so, when other ways and means, for the suppression of heresies, were judged convenient and needful. The Lord Christ," adds this illustrious champion, in language full of consolation and triumph, "The Lord Christ, continueth his word, with the faithful ministry, to reveal, declare and vindicate the sacred truth, for the conviction of gainayers; and if we are not wanting to our duty, through the aids of divine grace promised us, we shall finally triumph in this cause, and transmit this truth, inviolate, to them that succeed us in the profession of it."

Owen's preface to his "Person and glory of Christ."

To this may be added, the remarks of a late, very elegant, and ingenious author. After pronouncing the peculiar doctrines of the cross to have been the great engine of reformation, he laments our present departure from these doctrines; and represents our present degeneracy of practice, as the immediate consequence of such departure. "They profess to make it their chief object to inculcate the moral and practical precepts of christianity, without sufficiently maintaining, often without justly

wield, in our warfare, those weapons which are *not carnal*, but *spiritual*; and then we may confidently trust, that they will be *mighty through God*, for the conversion and salvation of souls.

Let none conclude from these observations, that the religion of nature is renounced, or the excellence of morality denied.. Shall we be charged with despising the gentle flowings of the rivulet, merely because we express greater emotions at the more majestic movements of the ocean; or with rejecting the light of the stars, because we kindle with greater admiration at the more dazzling glories of the sun? We preach the necessity of love to God, not indeed as the foundation of our acceptance, but the effect of his love, *shining in the face of Jesus Christ*. We profess the necessity of repentance, although not the condition of our reconciliation, yet as a grace, wrought in the heart, by the Holy Ghost. We exhibit the moral law, not indeed to

laying, the grand foundation of the sinner's acceptance with God, or pointing out how the practical precepts of christianity grow out of her peculiar doctrines, and are inseparably connected with them. By this fatal error, the very genius and essential nature of christianity underwent a change. She no longer retained her peculiar character, or produced that appropriate frame of spirit, by which her followers had been characterised."

Willforce's View—268, 269.

be obeyed for salvation, but as fulfilled in its precept by the *life*, as satisfied in its penalty by the *death*, of the everlasting surety, and now proposed as the rule of our obedience in his hand. We maintain the excellence of morality, of love to God, of good will to men, although not as procuring the favor of the Eternal, yet as blessed consequences of our union to the Son of God, and influences derived from him, as our ever-living HEAD. We acknowledge the charms of virtue, of patience under suffering, of forgiveness to those who injure us, of compassion towards our fellow-mortals in distress: But this virtue, this patience, this forbearance, these compassions, like so many plants of righteousness, must grow on Calvary, and be nourished with the blood of its cross. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."

3. We learn from this doctrine, the importance of being wholly occupied in the duties of our office; of being employed, either privately exploring these mysteries of the kingdom, or publicly distributing them to the necessities of the family. It is cause of humiliation and grief, that many, who were once solemnly consecrated to the service of the gospel, afterwards relinquish, in part, their occupation: They prostitute their time and talents to

purposes widely different and inferior. One becomes embarrassed with the cares of this world ; another assumes the statesman, by engaging in political discussions ; another is involved in philosophical research, or in some other pursuit, foreign to his ministerial office. These exercises, as applied to the spiritual steward, may be pronounced *striving, but not lawfully*. Thus to be occupied, is indeed running a race, but wandering from the path which leads to the prize. “ No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the cares of this life ; that he may please him who hath called him to be a soldier.” What ! are not the mysteries of Jehovah incarnate, and our redemption through his blood, sufficiently ennobling to occupy our undivided attention ? Here is range, ample, unbounded range, for the most speculative understanding, for the most excursive imagination. What nobler subject can occupy the research of mortals, than the mystery of a TRIUNE JEHOVAH : THREE in ONE : ONE in THREE ? What more exalted theme than GOD, *manifested in the flesh* ? That matchless, mysterious name, so full of grace, so full of glory, IMMANUEL ; uniting in itself, the uncreated, eternal excellencies of the God ; the finite, frail properties of the man ? What subject more elevating in itself, more interesting to us, than the substitution of the eternal Son in our covenant room ? He condemn-

ed, that we might be acquitted ? He a man of sorrows, that we might partake ineffable joy ? The Son degraded to the condition of a servant, that the slave might be promoted to the dignity of sons ! Myſteries theſe, which the intellect of Gabriel, however enlarged, is too contracted to comprehend ; and after the reſearch of eternity, ſhall not be fully explored. How dignified in itſelf ; how appropriate to every ambaffador of Jeſus, was that reſolution of the apoſtle—“ What things were gain to me ;” whatever might ſubſerve my worldly eaſe or intereſt ; whatever might promote my reputation as a ſcholar and philoſopher ; “ theſe I counted loſs for Chriſt.” We behold the illuſtrious champion, taking each external advantage, nobly ſacrificing it on the croſs of calvary, and deſiring to glory in *nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified*. That ſame miniſtry, which formed the delight, the boaſt, of his own ſoul, he powerfully* preſſed upon

* The obligations impoſed on candidates for the miniſtry in the Epiſcopal church, ſo replete with ſound inſtruction, and ſo pertinent to our preſent purpoſe, cannot be improperly inſerted. “ They are required to have always painted on their remembrance, how great a treaſure was committed to their charge ; and to apply themſelves, wholly, to this one thing, and to draw all their cares, and ſtudies this way, and to this end ; and that by their daily reading and weighing the ſcriptures, they will ſtudy to wax riper and ſtronger in the miniſtry.”

Burnet's Paſtoral Care.—Page 89.

Timothy his son :—" Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate on these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear unto all."

Permit me, reverend Fathers and Brethren, to trespass longer on your patience, by adverting to the high dignity and awful solemnity, of this stewardship, committed to our trust. How honorable the condition of being workers together with Jehovah, in that most sublime, most astonishing, of his purposes, the recovery of a perishing world ! To stand as ambassadors for the KING of Kings ; and by all the majesty of his authority, by all the endearments of his grace, entreat sinners to be reconciled, to believe, and repent, and be saved ! " The ministry of reconciliation is given us." In holy admiration, may not each of us exclaim—Lord, what am I, that I should be thus distinguished ; that to me the unsearchable riches should be entrusted ! In holy gratitude, may we not adore with the apostle, " I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," that, weak as I am, worthless as I am, " he hath accounted me faithful ; putting me into the ministry : " He hath committed to me that treasure, by which my own

soul may be enriched, and which enriches to immortal glory, all who receive it ! That Jehovah should save any of our apostate race, is a subject of wonder ; but that he should choose one of this race, who is by nature equally guilty, equally polluted, equally abominable, and appoint him the instrument of salvation to others, is a wonder that surpasseth : It is a mystery of sovereignty, of grace, of condescension, which excites our gratitude now, and must fill all heaven with admiration through eternity. “ O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ! For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things ; to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Again, bear with me, while we reflect on the awful solemnity of our office. To us, the souls, the precious souls of men, are now committed ; and at our hands, if indolent or unfaithful, their damnation will finally be charged. Are we duly impressed with this all-solemn consideration ? Do we occasionally throw our eyes over our flock, viewing each individual, each man, each woman, under our care, as a trust committed us of the living God ; as a candidate for an immortal destiny, either of glory, or of wrath ? Are we watching over them, “ with prayers and tears, night and day, as

those who must give an account ; that we may do it with joy and not with grief." Have we been, in no instance chargeable, either through indifference or untenderness, with the complaint urged against the shepherds of Israel ? " Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe with the wool, but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened ; neither have ye healed that which was sick ; neither have ye bound up that which was broken ; neither have ye brought again that which was driven away ; neither have ye sought that which was lost." Are we careful to recommend, by every part of our deportment in private, those doctrines which we announce from the pulpit—" Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed ; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God ; in labors, in watchings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the armour of righteousness, upon the right hand and upon the left." If any man neglect the great salvation, he shall not, he cannot escape : But the damnation of the unholy, unprofitable servant, must be dreadful beyond description. While he is doomed to endure, in his own person, that worm which never dies, and those flames which shall never be quenched ; that worm shall be envenomed, those flames infuriated, by the blasphemies of others, brought to

perdition through his inattention and sloth. They will be eternally reviling him; gnashing their teeth upon him, as chargeable with their destruction, by not forewarning them of that place of torment. "O Lord, who is sufficient for these things? O Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no flesh be justified."

Impressed with these considerations, does it not become us to awake from our sloth; to throw off every weight, whatever might embarrass us in discharging the duties of our high vocation; to keep every gift, every grace, in constant, vigorous exercise; to occupy, with unremitting diligence, each moment of our time? Accursed be that present ease, which is indulged at the peril of never-ending pain. Let that gain be rejected, as worse than loss, which is obtained at the hazard of our own damnation, or the damnation of those committed to our care.—May those moments perish from the record of our lives, which are wasted in idleness, in amusements, in worldly company, or worldly avocations; while our brethren by nature are sinking a prey to devouring flames. Let those honors wither in eternal disgrace, which are sought in pursuits foreign to our ministerial profession, while men are *perishing, for whom Christ died*; men who might have eternally adorned his mediatorial crown. By all the value

of our own souls ; by all the value of the souls of others ; by the compassions of a bleeding Saviour ; by the solemnities of his second appearing ; by the terrors of being *cast, as unprofitable servants, into outer darkness*, while others, our inferiors, it may be, in age, and opportunity, and office, are welcomed to the joys of their Lord ; let us be roused to *preach the word ; to remain instant, in season, and out of season ; to make full proof of our ministry*. The Lord enable us all so to run, that we may obtain the prize. May he render us instrumental in turning *many to righteousness* ; that through the riches of his grace, we may *shine as stars, and suns, in his everlasting kingdom*.

Called to be a steward of the mysteries of God, I conclude, offering them to the reception of the family present. By the authority of the great Lord of the house, I this moment unlock these treasures, these inexhaustible treasures, and tender them for the use, the enjoyment, of every man, of every woman, in this assembly. Art thou in poverty ? I present thee unsearchable riches. Art thou naked ? I offer thee incorruptible clothing ; robes of everlasting righteousness. Art thou in want ? I tender thee immortal bread ; that bread, of which he who partakes shall hunger no more. Art thou in debt, bound over to the curse of a broken covenant ? I announce the jubilee of release :

I offer thee a pardon, written in the blood of God, and sealed by a triune Jehovah. Art thou unworthy? I am warranted to tender all, of grace, free grace, absolute grace, unconditional, unmerited grace. All these treasures of the kingdom, precious as they are, costly as they were to the eternal surety; all these treasures are as free to thee, as the grace of Jehovah can render them, or the lips of Jehovah can pronounce them. Would to God, I could prevail with you to receive them! Would to God, I could persuade every male, and every female; the bond and the free; the black and the white; the more pure and the more profligate; to draw near, and accept this great salvation. *“The Spirit and the Bride say, come: Let him that heareth say, come: Let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life, freely.” “We are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead; be ye reconciled to God.”*

Now to Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we can ask or think; to this Lord Jesus, who purchased, with the eternal Father, who elected, and the ever-blessed Spirit, who applies; the Author of all grace in time, and of all glory through eternity; be ascribed worship and adoration, now and everlastingly. AMEN.



A SERIOUS AND AFFECTIONATE

ADDRESS

TO THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,

BY A SOCIETY LATELY ESTABLISHED FOR THE

SUPPRESSION OF VICE AND IMMORALITY.

Sin is the reproach, and if persevered in will be the destruction, of any people.

Fellow Citizens,

In proportion to the prevalence of vice and immorality in any place, its inhabitants are in danger of temporal calamity and eternal destruction. Vice, in its own nature, leads to shame, disgrace and misery—It debases the mind, takes off the restraints of conscience, weakens the obligations to social and relative duties, and opens the way for fraud, oppression and every species of violence. It is peculiarly dangerous on account of its diffusive and insinuating qualities ; like leaven it soon, if not suppressed, leaveneth the whole lump, spreads itself thro' the whole mass of society, and endangers every thing that ought to be near and dear to man. Every friend then to social order and happiness ought to be an enemy to vice ; and should engage with heart and hand to suppress it.

It is not only dangerous on account of its own baneful nature and tendency ; but peculiarly so, because it provoketh the anger of God, and brings down upon man the vengeance of heaven. God is angry with the wicked every day, and frequently executes upon them, even in this world, singular judgments.

Now the only effectual barrier, against vice and immorality, is religion and its institutions. When, therefore the most important religious institutions are disregarded, contemned and violated, there is the greatest cause for the most serious alarm. The barrier being removed the flood comes upon us irresistibly, and we are swept not only to temporal but eternal destruction.

WE would observe, then, that the sabbath has always been considered the great palladium, the grand safe-guard of morality, piety and religion. By enjoining upon them the observance of the sabbath, God distinguished the Jews from the Heathens. And to prove that it was one of the most important of Divine institutions, God frequently promised them very great blessings if they revered it; and as often denounced the most awful judgments if they violated it. Out of a great number we will select a few of the promises—"Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it. If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob. And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden thro' the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; then shall there enter into the gates of this city, kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever." These are great and glorious promises both of temporal and eternal blessings. Hear now the threatenings denounced against the violation of the sabbath. Here too we shall make a very small selection.

"YE shall keep the sabbath: every one that defileth it, shall surely be put to death. Whosoever doth any work on the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death." And it was not only threatened against a man that was found gathering sticks on the sabbath day, that he should be put to death; but by the direction of the Lord to Moses he was actually stoned to death by the congregation of Israel. And in the prophecy of Jeremiah, we read, "But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." And this was literally and awfully fulfilled at the final destruction of Jerusalem. Notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the emperor Titus to save some of the most elegant buildings, and especially the Temple, it was all reduced to ashes. And Nehemiah represents that the violation of the sabbath had been the cause of a former destruction of Jerusalem, and of the Jews being carried into a long, disgraceful and severe captivity. "Then (saith he,) I contended with the Nobles of Judah, and said

“unto them, what evil thing is this that you do, and profane the sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city; yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.”

CHRISTIANITY has changed the day, but except, that it has increased, it has not changed the obligation to the religious observance of it. It has corrected the superstition and ceremonies of the Jews, directing christians to a spiritual service; enforcing by higher motives, the devotion of a seventh part of our time to the glory of God and the Redeemer. Were they bound to keep holy the seventh day to commemorate the creation or deliverance from Egyptian bondage? Surely we are bound by much stronger motives to keep holy the first day of the week, to commemorate the work of Redemption, in the splendor of which all other works are eclipsed. Did they keep holy a day to commemorate the creation of a world to temporal life? And shall not we keep holy a day to commemorate the creation of a world to eternal life? The two great objects of the sabbath ever have been and still shall be the same. The objects are these, to glorify God and to prepare man for an eternal sabbath in heaven.

FROM these promises and threatenings we infer, not only that the violation of the sabbath is a crime, and will certainly be severely punished; but also, that wherever it prevails, every other vice is let loose, and the people's iniquities become full, and call down upon them the just and awful vengeance of heaven. This is farther proved too by the history of the Jews and of every other nation where the sabbath is known. The sabbath being appointed immediately by God, and the observance of it, being peculiarly well calculated to make and cultivate deep impressions of God and divine things, and of the evil nature and dangerous consequences of sin, it is certainly to be expected, that, when men are hardened enough to disregard it; and when such a strong barrier against vice is taken away, iniquity will come in like a flood. That this has always been the case, and that the wrath of God in consequence hath been poured out, history unequivocally attests.

WHEN, therefore, we see the sacred institution of the sabbath generally violated and contemned, we have the greatest reason for the most serious alarm. Julian the Apostate and most bitter enemy of christianity did all he could to destroy it. He was of opinion and justly too, that if he succeeded in this, he secured success in the destruction of the christian religion. The matter then comes to this point—Are we willing that christianity should be banished

from us, and that heathenism and worse than it, should be introduced? How was it, a few years ago, with a certain European Nation? They for a while banished, as far as they could, the observance of the sabbath, and consequently, christianity. What was the consequence? Read the history and shudder! Universal confusion, massacre and bloodshed immediately ensued! All ranks and sexes were dragged to the scaffold, and crimsoned it with their blood! Many previously had congratulated themselves upon the happy effects as they supposed of the introduction of what they called philosophy, another name for irreligion and deism; but they became themselves the melancholy victims!

WE who are advocates for the observance of the sabbath, and the suppression of vice and immorality, are considered by many, the greatest enemies to what they call the best interests of this land. But let our opponents prevail; and behold the consequence! a curse temporal and eternal upon you and your posterity! Be assured we have your best interests in view, both for this and a future world. "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come." What selfish or earthly interest, as they calculate interest, can we have in view? Nay, on the contrary, we expose ourselves to scoff and derision; to threats of pecuniary injury, and if they dare, to personal abuse and persecution. These things, however, we regard not, if we promote the good of man and the interest of religion. "If God be for us, none can be against us."

EVEN the deist must admit, that God governs the world: and surely none should, none can expect to prosper in the direct violation of his institutions. It should be duly considered, that we are transacting not only for ourselves, but for our children. Veterans may be able to withstand the enemy and conquer, whilst the raw and unexperienced would soon be foiled and worsted. If the young see vice and irreligion generally prevail, they will become familiar with them, and at length consider them innocent, and be carried away with the destructive torrent. The beginning of vice is like the letting out of water; at first it may be easily stopped; but, if permitted to continue, it irresistibly inundates every thing in its way. If vice and immorality, then, were only beginning to prevail amongst us, it is high time for us to be at our posts. If our children see the sabbath habitually and with impunity violated, they will grow up in irreverence for it, and consequently in heathenism: for we have before proved, that there is no christianity without the observance of the sabbath. Every man, then, who

consents to the violation of it, consents to the destruction of religion, and to the prevalence of vice of every description ; and who ever wilfully and habitually violates it himself, lifts his hand and strikes as heavy a blow as he can for the same fatal purposes.

WERE we attempting to prevent the propagation of a severe and mortal disease, to appease the anger of a powerful Prince, or to exclude the devouring beasts of the forest, we would be highly commended, and have many, doubtless, to unite with us. Our objects are much more important. We are endeavouring to prevent the extension of sin, which threatens not only the body with temporal ; but soul and body with eternal death. We wish to put a stop to the devastations of the monster Vice, and the roaring Lion, which is going about seeking whom he may devour, and to ward off the vengeance of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords. " He has bent his bow, and made it ready : he hath prepared for him the instruments of death." You perhaps may see none of these evils threatening you : Your not seeing them however makes them no less certain. The bird on the tree is never more insensible of danger, than when the piece of the fowler is levelled for its destruction ; yet its danger is no less for its not seeing it : nay, it is increased, for if it had known, it might have made its escape. But we see your danger, and if we did not warn you of it and endeavour to rescue you from it, we would be monsters in society.

WERE Babylon and Nineveh destroyed ! Were Sodom and Gomorrha consumed with fire and brimstone from heaven ! It was because vice and immorality prevailed to a great degree, and provoked the Almighty. Did the Jews suffer pestilence and famine ! Did the heavens become brass over their heads and the earth iron under their feet ! Were they frequently carried away into disgraceful and severe captivity ! Was Jerusalem, their glory and their boast, at length totally destroyed ! Were its walls and its superb temple razed to the foundation ! Did it exhibit no spectacle within but massacre and death, and none without, but gibbets and crosses, and thousands of victims, expiring on them in groans and shrieks, and cries and blood ! All these things befel the Jews, on account of their violation of God's laws, and especially of the sabbath ; on account of their abuse of their peculiar privileges, their irreligion, impenitence and infidelity.

WE as a Nation, have been highly favored by a kind providence, and have greatly prospered. Within a few years we have risen from poverty and insignificance in the scale of Nations, to a great

degree of wealth and respectability. Many important spiritual and temporal blessings have been richly conferred upon us. From our happy land, "the darkness, that covered the earth, and "the gross darkness which overwhelmed the people, hath fled away," beyond, far beyond the cloud capp'd mountain : and the sun of righteousness, the light of the gospel shines upon us with meridian and uneclipsed splendor. Here no altars burn to Idols ; no temples are erected to demons—Here the hearts of mothers are not pierced, nor their nerves convulsed, with the cries of their children, expiring in flames, as offerings to dumb Idols—Here the sword of persecution is sheathed ; the flames of martyrdom are extinguished, and every person, unmolested, may worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience. Whilst many Nations are harrassed with war in all its ghastly terrors, we enjoy peace with all its blessings. In Europe you may see armies in numbers equal to locusts ; (but in destruction infinitely worse,) entering populous and flourishing countries—Terror, dismay and consternation wild go before them ; devastation and violence, carnage and death accompany them ; pain, distress and famine, pale and direful follow them. Their plains are deluged with blood and covered with carnage ; and the mountains reecho the shrieks, the sighs and the groans of the wounded and dying. Great indeed then is the contrast, between our situation and that of Europe. Truly numerous and great are our blessings and privileges as a Nation.

Do we not then owe much gratitude to Heaven ? Is it not the Lord, who hath thus prospered us ? But what returns have we made ? Have we duly appreciated and improved our privileges ? Do we reverence God's ordinances and hallow his sabbaths ? Are vice, irreligion and infidelity ashamed to show their heads amongst us ? or do they greatly abound and triumph, and are the sacred name and holy day of the Lord almost universally profaned ? If the latter be the fact, our situation is truly dangerous and awful. "It will "be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment than it will be for us. Thou Capernaum, who hast been "exalted to heaven shalt be sunk down to hell." This threatening is denounced against us, "If ye will not hearken unto me saith the "Lord, to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden on the "sabbath day ; then will I kindle a fire in thy gates, and it shall "not be quenched."

Is it not then high time for us, as citizens to awake out of our sleep, and to open our eyes ! Do we see the clouds thickening, the tempest blackening ; and the lightnings beginning to flash !

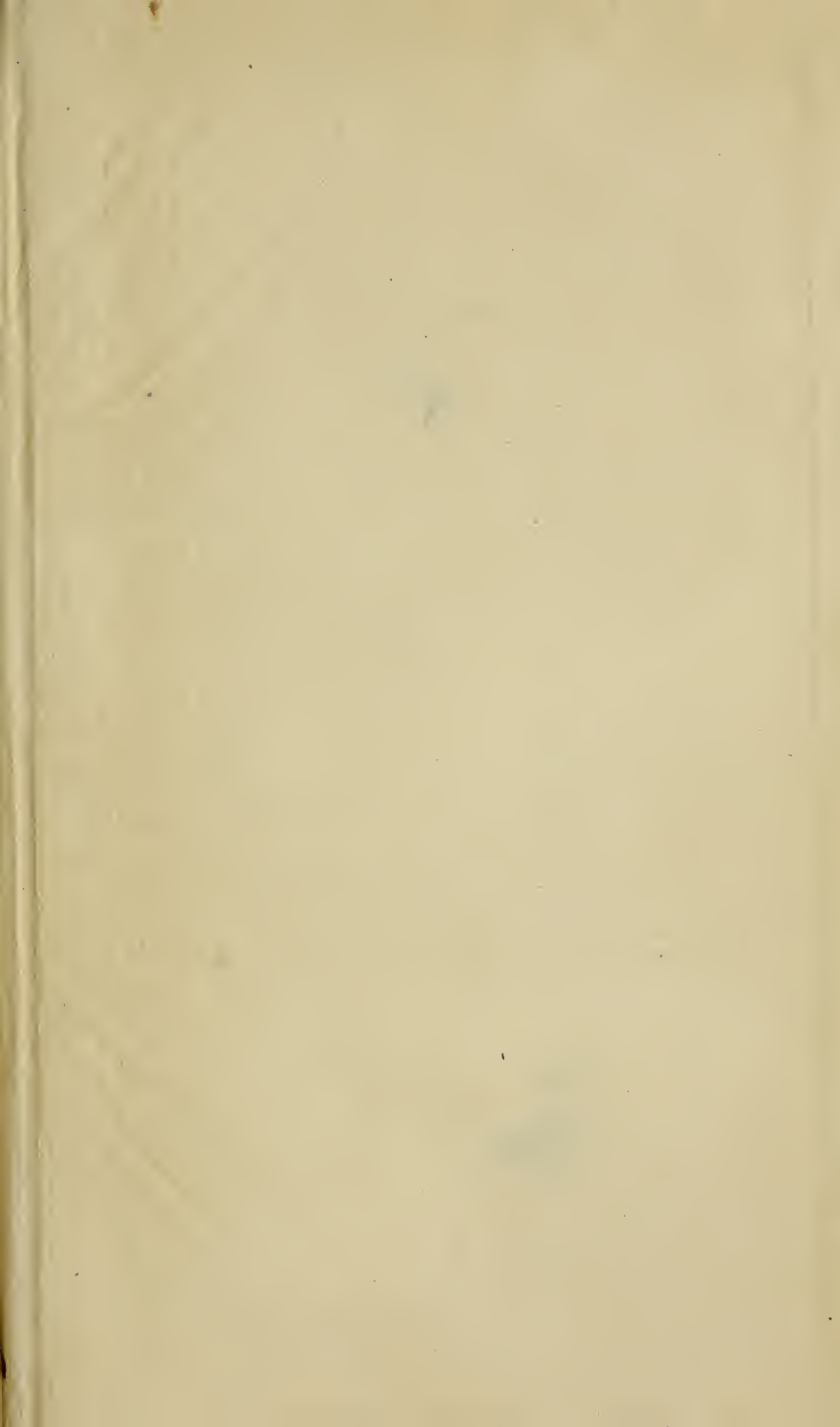
Be assured evil times are coming, times fraught with direful calamity and distress, destruction and death ! We then earnestly invite and conjure all friends to morality, virtue and piety to rally round our standard. Christians come forth boldly and quit yourselves like men. Does the enemy come in like a flood, set your faces like a flint against him. Let us like Jonah preach repentance to Nineveh, if peradventure she may repent, and yet for a while be saved from the vengeance of heaven. Or, like righteous Lot in Sodom, let us make a bold stand against vice and irreligion ; and if after our united and zealous endeavors we cannot succeed ; if the wicked will not hear nor forbear, they must be left to perish in their sins, and their accumulated guilt must fall on their own heads.

To conclude, we earnestly warn all the licentious and profane, and especially the habitual and notorious violaters of the sabbath, to break off their sins by repentance, and to turn unto the Lord that he may have mercy upon you, and unto our God that he may abundantly pardon you. Flee for mercy before it be forever hid from your eyes. We warn you by the terrors of the Divine law : We conjure you by the vengeance of God. " His arm is not shortened that it cannot save ;" neither is it shortened that it cannot destroy. " He will by no means clear the guilty ; and he " is a consuming fire to the wicked." Tho' you may escape the penalty of human, you cannot escape the penalty of the Divine Laws. Tho' the law of man may not reach you for the violation, the law of God will punish you for violating his sabbaths. What does it profit a criminal to escape for awhile, if his punishment be severe in proportion to its delay. Be assured the time is fast coming when you will throw to the moles and to the bats all the unjust gains, which you have made by breaking the laws of God or of man. Death stands at the door and knocks : With its summons in your hands would you dare to profane the holy name or day of the Lord ! How soon this may be the case God only knows. —Keep death and hell, judgment and eternity always before you, and dare not to sin.

FINALLY, we conjure every person to break off his sins by repentance, and so to live and fulfil his duty in the station in which he is placed, as he would wish he had done ; nay, would give ten thousand worlds that he had done, when he comes to die ; when he appears at the Bar of God.

F I N I S .





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