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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

A SERMON,

*Delivered by appointment of the Assembly's Committee of Missions,
in the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, on Monday
Evening, May 21, 1810.*

[The Editor does not contemplate the frequent publication of entire discourses, as long as that which follows; but the excellency of this sermon, and the injury which will be done to it, by breaking it into fragments, have induced the determination to depart, for once at least, from the plan which has been laid down. Subscribers who seriously desire to profit by reading the Monitor, will hardly censure the measure which, on this occasion has been adopted.]

I. COR. ii, 2.—*I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him Crucified.*

THE Apostle tells the Corinthians, in the verse immediately preceding our text, "that he came not to them with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto them the testimony of God." He used no artifices of eloquence nor of sophistry; affected no pomp of language nor subtlety of speculation. However fond he knew the people of Greece to be of these splendid trifles, and however he might be qualified, as a man of talents and learning, to attract their applause to himself, by gratifying their taste for such things, he rejected them all with a noble disdain. "For," says he, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Instead of the ostentatious display of erudition and worldly wisdom with which the pretended philosophers of the age imposed upon the people, it was the determination of the Apostle not to appear to know, nor endeavour to make known any thing except Christ crucified. We cannot understand him to mean that he confined himself to the repetition of the naked facts, that Jesus was the Messiah so long expected by the Jews, and that he suffered the death of the cross. In the recorded discourses of the Apostle, and in his letters to churches and individuals, he exhibits the whole circle of religious doctrines and duties. But he makes Christ crucified the centre of that circle. He uniformly represents the cross of Christ not as a mere circumstance, not as one among many things of equal moment, but as the very life and soul of the message which he was commissioned to proclaim to the Gentiles.

Nor was Paul singular in this conduct. — It was that of all the Apostles. Though they well knew that Christ crucified was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, “they gloried in the doctrines of the cross.” They preached it every where with all boldness and perseverance. They resolved to suffer, and did actually suffer every extremity of opposition, even to tortures and death, rather than desist from the inculcation of this despised doctrine.

Had the gospel preached by these missionaries been a cunningly devised fable, surely they could not have acted in this manner. Is it possible that any attentive and candid reader of the New Testament can charge them with imposture? This is not the place to make a formal defence of the gospel against unbelievers. But as we pass along, the dilemma is seriously proposed to their consideration; either that the Apostles of Christ were downright madmen, or that the history concerning them is absolutely a fiction, both which suppositions appear to us inexpressibly absurd; or else that the doctrine of the cross, however strange it may appear, is the truth of God, “worthy of all acceptation,” and its first teachers are to be esteemed among the greatest and best men that have ever existed.

The design of our discourse is to give some account of the nature and importance of this doctrine; and to deduce from it a few practical inferences suitable to the present occasion.

The ultimate end of Christ's mission is to display to the intelligent creation the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. The gospel was instituted “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Therefore, “unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.” Now the death of Christ is the principal theme of the evangelic system. It is the grand meritorious consideration for which God bestows upon us all the blessings comprised in our salvation, from the commencement of our deliverance from sin to our establishment in eternal felicity. Not that the death of our Redeemer is to be contemplated alone, exclusive of the other instances of his obedience and suffering for us in the days of his flesh. For our sake “he took upon him the form of a servant,” and was obedient to his Father's laws. “He was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,” and bore our iniquities throughout the period of his humiliation. But his death upon the cross stands most conspicuous, and is referred to most frequently and emphatically; because it was the consummation of all the rest, and because then especially “it pleased the Lord to bruise him,” and “his soul was made an offering for sin,” voluntarily enduring whatever was requisite in order that God might be just in our salvation.

Some have distinguished between the active and passive obedience of Christ, as not only different in their nature, but also in the ends to be answered by them; attributing distinctly to the one the pardon

of our sins, and to the other our title to Heaven, with the grace necessary to prepare us for it. But this seems to be an unwarrantable refinement. It accords better with the scriptural representation to conceive of all that our Redeemer did and suffered for us as one undivided whole, the price of our complete salvation. It was necessary, according to the councils of infinite wisdom, that he should be perfectly holy as the Father's servant, triumphant over all temptation; and in his sufferings "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." By all this he became "the Lord our righteousness," the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

But instead of enlarging farther upon this general view of the subject, it will be more profitable to descend to particulars. Our salvation may conveniently be divided into three great branches, namely, justification, sanctification, and glorification. If it can be proved that all these blessings depend upon the cross of Christ, and are thence derived to us, we shall see abundant reasons why the Apostle determined, and why we ought to determine, in the sense already intimated, not to know any thing except Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

Justification is the act of God, in which he pardons our sins and receives us into his favour. This implies that we are sinners before God; a truth which we take for granted in the present investigation. The gospel constantly presupposes all mankind to be in a state of just condemnation, exposed to everlasting punishment. And here the important question arises, how can sinful man be justified before God, consistently with the holiness of his character, and the preservation of his authority as Governor of the world? Shall we presume to imagine that sin is a mere trifle, or that it is of no moment whether God maintains his own honour or not? Shall we fancy that his word, and the rights of his government are to be prostrated for the sake of exercising mercy to rebellious sinners? So long as we wilfully darken our minds with such mists of folly and impiety, nay so long as we refuse to pause and consider our situation, we shall feel no interest in the question about our acceptance with God. But let God be contemplated as he really is spotless in holiness, inflexible in justice, "a consuming Fire" to the workers of iniquity. Let the hateful and destructive nature of sin be understood. Let an enlightened conscience perform its office with fidelity, convincing the sinner deeply what he is, and what he deserves. Let the denunciations of the Almighty be heard and believed. With what solicitude, with what consternation, does the sinner now inquire how he may stand justified before this most holy God? Will you exhort him for that purpose to repentance and amendment of life? His moral impotency renders a genuine reformation of heart and life too hard a task for him to accomplish. But were it otherwise, what atonement can repentance and future obedience make for past transgression? What illustration do they afford of the justice of God in receiving the sinner to favour? Surely none. The sinner, then, is every way reduced to despair, until the light of the gospel visits his benighted mind.— Here we discover the tender mercy of God displayed, in perfect harmony with his holiness, by the cross of Jesus Christ. We find

that "God hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." We learn that "by Jesus Christ God has predestinated us unto the adoption of children to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." We are said to be "justified freely by his grace; through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God, that he might be just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus. This glorious doctrine is to be preached in all the earth. Perishing sinners are to be urged and intreated to receive it with all thankfulness, committing their souls, in a cheerful confidence of faith, to the Saviour whom God has appointed. And as many as do so, "being justified by faith, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It would require a volume to collect the tessimonies of scripture upon this subject. They meet the eye in almost every page of the bible. The sum of the whole is, that Jesus Christ has, by his Father's will and his own, substituted himself under the law for us, and by his obedience unto death has rendered a proper and full satisfaction to Divine Justice; thereby opening an honourable way for the dispensation of mercy, that God may be just in forgiving his sins, adopting us as his children, and making us heirs of eternal life in his heavenly kingdom.

As we can never completely estimate the dignity of our Redeemer's character, he being no less than "God manifest in the flesh;" so it is believed that we never shall be able fully to conceive the sufferings which he endured for our redemption; especially when he "bore our sins in his own body on the tree," and was for a time forsaken by his Father. But in proportion as our ideas enlarge upon these points, we shall discern more and more of the value of his atonement; that is, its fitness to display the holiness of God in our salvation. And in the same proportion we shall learn to understand "the love of God in the world in giving his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him may not perish, but have everlasting life." Our justification exhibits in the liveliest and most admirable union the rectitude and the benevolence of God. For while it is done upon the intercession of Jesus Christ, and for the sake of his perfect righteousness set to our account, it essentially includes the provision of such a Saviour for us, and the infliction upon him of "the chastisement of our peace," that "with his stripes we might be healed." Well may we then exclaim, in the language of inspiration "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

It is evident that the scriptures, taken in their plain and obvious meaning, inculcate the proper atonement of Christ, as it has always been understood and believed by the church of God. It is true that this doctrine involves mysteries beyond our comprehension. But

what then? If the most simple objects in nature present insuperable barriers to our investigation, is it incredible, is it at all strange, that the most perfect work of divine love and wisdom should be too sublime for the grasp of our feeble powers? Is it for us, worms of the dust, who are but of yesterday, and know nothing," to decide that Jehovah cannot exist in a threefold personal distinction of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? That the Son of God could not assume our nature into personal union with his own? That the voluntary sacrifice of himself, bearing his Father's wrath in our stead, could not be just, nor availing for our deliverance from ruin? Shall we despise an authentic revelation of mercy from Heaven because it is mysterious? Or, professing to receive it, shall we violate its sanctity with our perverse criticisms, and labour to explain away its fundamental doctrines? Shall we cover the sacrifices of the ancient church with an impenetrable veil of darkness? Shall we "deny the Lord who bought us," and dash from our lips "the cup of salvation?" And all for the sake of idolizing our own weakness and pride under the abused name of reason? God forbid!

Sanctification consists in our being delivered from the power of sin, and brought into willing subjection to the laws of God. It is not intended here to prove our insufficiency for affecting this great change, nor the necessity of the change itself to our eternal welfare; but to establish and illustrate its dependence upon the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only let it be observed that, according to the constitution of the gospel, we cannot be justified until our sanctification is begun; some degree of holy disposition being implied in the exercise of that faith which is an essential pre-requisite to our justification.

In the economy of divine grace it is the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the soul. Christians are said to be "born of the Spirit. "They, and they only, who are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God." And the holy principles of action which characterise the regenerate soul are denominated "the fruit of the Spirit." Now the scriptures represent this blessed Agent as performing his work in consequence of the mediation of Christ. For instance, when we are informed that "God saved us according to his mercy by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost," it is immediately added, "which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." We are not to conceive of the Holy Spirit as a mere instrument in our sanctification. As he is God, equal with the Father and the Son, he doubtless participated in the counsels of eternal mercy. But without a satisfaction rendered on our behalf to the justice of God, it was impossible that any friendly intercourse, any process for reconciling us sinners to God, could ever be instituted. It is, therefore, only in connexion with Christ crucified, and through the merit of his atonement, that the Holy Spirit comes to restore us to communion with God. Upon this ground we are to ask the sanctifying grace of the Spirit, for ourselves and others, in the name of Jesus Christ. If we are led by the Spirit to obey the commandments of God, it is because we are "created in Christ Jesus unto

good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." And, while we adore the Holy Spirit of our Sanctification ascribing to his unsearchable and almighty agency upon our hearts every improvement that we make in piety and virtue, it behoves us constantly to remember him who "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

There is another point of view in which our sanctification depends upon the cross of Christ, namely, as it is of all means the best adapted, in its own nature, for the purpose, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is in fact rendered the most effectual. Sanctification is ordinarily a progressive work, carried on by the instrumentality of rational motives, exciting our affections and directing our conduct, until by continual advances, in conformity with the general laws of habit, we arrive at perfection. Far be it from us to disparage any motive whatever leading to Holiness. But we may safely assert that no other is to be compared with the doctrine of the cross, whether we consider it in its native tendency, or in the preference given to it by divine appointment. Where shall we begin, or where shall we end, upon this delightful subject?

It is obvious that our progress in obedience to the laws of God will be proportioned to our habitual impressions of the evil of sin and the excellence of righteousness. And whence can we derive such impressions with equal readiness or force as from the cross of our Redeemer? We may argue much upon these topics, very justly and usefully indeed, by referring to the authority of God our Creator, the present advantages of a devout and virtuous life, the miseries which attend transgression in this world, and the eternal rewards which await the righteous and the wicked respectively in the world to come. But when we seriously contemplate the death of Jesus Christ for our redemption, the scattered rays of truth concerning sin and righteousness meet in the heart, and act upon it with an energy not to be expressed. So essentially does moral rectitude constitute the glory of God, so necessary is it to the welfare of his universal kingdom, that its honours must, at whatever expense the case requires, be fully supported. So mischievous, so abominable a thing is sin, that the God of love cannot pardon it without an atonement of infinite value, an atonement which could only be made by "the Lord from Heaven," who is at once the son of man, and the Son of God, equal with the Father. Surely nothing else can have so strong a tendency, in the nature of things, as the sufferings of Christ in our stead, to destroy our love of sin, and inspire our hearts with fervent aspirations after holiness. The scriptures constantly refer to the cross of Christ as the most powerful motive to repentance and cordial obedience. "I will pour upon the house of David," says Jehovah, "and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born." "They that are Christ's," says the Apostle, "have crucified the flesh,

with the affections and lusts." Again "in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God: likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." With these sentiments the experience of God's people still coincides. Ask them what melts their hearts most completely into godly sorrow? What gives them the greatest abhorrence of sin? What makes them discern most clearly the beauty of holiness, and press forward most earnestly after the full possession of the image of God? They will answer with one voice, the cross of Christ. They will exclaim with the Apostle, "God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world."

The cross of Christ is calculated, above all things, to animate the heart with gratitude; and by doing so tends greatly to promote our sanctification. No man who has ever felt gratitude needs to be informed that it is a very lively principle of action. Now what can impress the heart with so deep a sense of obligation as the gift of God's dear Son to die for our redemption? What can vie with this transcendent proof of benevolence in moving every faculty of our nature to vigorous exertion in the service of God? It is true that we cannot render to him an adequate return for this amazing mercy, nor be profitable to him as we may be to one another. But he graciously invites our praises, and accepts our efforts to testify our gratitude and glorify his name by our obedience to his laws. It is an affecting consideration too that the immediate conduct of the kingdom of righteousness is given to our Lord Jesus Christ, as a reward for his humiliation and sufferings. He unites in himself the offices of a Prince and a Saviour. The law of God, which once spoke nothing to us but guilt and condemnation, is now a rule in the hands of our Redeemer to guide our feet in the way of peace. His royal authority is founded upon his priesthood. And we pursue the path of holiness with redoubled zeal and activity, while we reflect that every step which we take expresses our thankful devotion to him who "loved us and gave himself for us;" who "was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." It is sometimes asserted that the mercy of God would shine more conspicuously in the pardon of sin without an atonement. But to what purpose should this be said, were it even true, since it is certain that justice was to be displayed in our salvation as well as mercy? If, however, we permit ourselves for a moment to suppose the possibility of an absolute dispensation of mercy, it is far from being true that it would make the mercy of God shine more brightly than it does in the gospel. We may appeal very confidently to every man of a sound and candid mind, whether the doctrine of the cross does not exhibit more impressively than any other conceivable scheme the misery into which we have fallen by sin, the compassion of God in our deliverance from it, and consequently the obligations under which we are laid to ardent and perpetual gratitude. The inspired writers abound with references to the cross of Christ in this way. "Ye are not your own," says one, "for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your

spirit which are God's." "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear, says another; "for as much as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And how does the heart of every sincere believer answer these exhortations? The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them and rose again."

To our progress in the divine life the cross of Christ is not less instrumental as a foundation of hope than in any other respect. The hope of success is indispensably requisite to all activity. And in proportion as the object to be obtained is distant, and the pursuit attended with difficulties, the ground of hope ought to be firm and manifest. Now our sanctification is a work at once absolutely necessary and exceedingly arduous. We have to advance in opposition to numerous, malignant, and powerful adversaries, visible and invisible. We carry a band of traitors in our own bosoms, namely the remains of sin, the most to be dreaded of all our foes. A complete victory is not to be obtained without many a painful struggle. That man has learned little of the Christian warfare who does not know his own weakness, lament his frequent defeats, and feel the need of some strong foundation on which to rest his hope of final success. To support our spirits in this situation, "there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we may be partakers of a divine nature." For instance; "I will pray the father and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever: even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Again; "God will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." If then we have reason to believe that God "has begun a good work in us," we may infer with confidence that "he will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Upon this hope the scriptures lay great stress. We are said to be saved by hope;" and are exhorted to "put on for a helmet the hope of salvation," as one of the best means to repel the assaults of our enemies. It only remains to observe that the promises upon which our hope is founded are given and confirmed through Jesus Christ, and are sealed to us by his blood. "All the promises of God are in him yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us," Christ is styled, emphatically and comprehensively, "our Hope." As to our sanctification in particular, we know that "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." Fixing our regard upon his cross, we feel ourselves strengthened with a lively hope of divine protection. No blessing appears too great to be expected from the Father for the sake of his Son, in whom he is ever well pleased. And we joyfully argue with the Apostle, "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him "also freely give us all things?"

The cross of Christ greatly subserves our sanctification as it sets before us the most illustrious example of patience. It pleased God to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings: and his followers are assured that "they must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." The trial of faith by afflictions was eminently the lot of the early Christian. But it was by no means peculiar to them. It is a fixed part of that system of discipline by which God prepares his children, in every age and nation, for the glory which is to be revealed. We live in a world full of calamities, the bitter fruits of our apostacy from God. We see the prediction still accomplished in fact, that "all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," in some form or other, from the people of the world. We need to be continually in the exercise of vigilance, as we are beset with manifold temptations to sin, from Satan, the men and things of the world, and the deceitfulness of our own hearts. In these circumstances, it is of great importance that we "possess our souls in patience," in a calm and meek temper, both towards God and towards men. The reverse of patience is a spirit of fretfulness against God, with its sure attendant, a disposition to resent and avenge the injuries which we receive from mankind. It is evident that so far as this spirit is indulged, it must check the whole work of grace in the soul. By what means then, under the agency of the Holy Spirit, shall we learn the difficult lesson of a "patient continuance in well-doing?" Doubtless, above all things, by attention to the example of our suffering Redeemer; who for our salvation "hid not his face from shame and spitting," that face from which earth and heaven shall one day flee away; who "was oppressed and afflicted, yea, led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet he opened not his mouth." "Let us lay aside every weight," says the Apostle, "and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." Is it probable that we shall murmur against the chastening hand of God, while we contemplate the Sufferer of Gethsemane, and strive to adopt his prayer; "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Shall we be disposed to seek revenge upon those who revile and persecute us, while we turn our eyes to Calvary and hear the Son of God praying on the cross for his murderers, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!" The cross of Christ changed a persecuting Saul, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter," into one of the most holy, benevolent and patient men that ever lived. And blessed be God, we see that it has not yet lost its efficacy. It still transforms the tyger into a lamb, the vulture into a dove. In the heart of the believer it still implants, instead of the selfish passions, the spirit of meekness and love towards all mankind; and instead of rebellion against God, a cheerful submission to his will.

Glorification consists in our being invested with the possession of the promised inheritance, of that "fulness of joy which is in the presence of God," and of those "pleasures which are at his right hand forever more." Of that inheritance the language of mortals can give no adequate description. "Our light affliction," says the Apostle, "which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If we have justly ascribed the former branches of our salvation to the cross of Christ, it is scarcely necessary to prove that the completion of all in heaven is to be referred to the same source, Eternal life is expressly called "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Christ comes, indeed, as a prophet from above, to illustrate the certainty of immortal life as a matter of fact. But he does much more. He claims it as his right to dispense that life to his people. "My sheep hear my voice," says he, "and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Again he says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." In a word, it is by the sentence of Jesus Christ, as judge of the world, that the saints shall be introduced into heaven, and fixed in its sure possession forever.— And whence does our Redeemer derive this high power of bestowing on whomsoever he will the treasures of immortal glory? It is a reward from the hands of his Father, for his obedience unto death. "Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him." "For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the First Testament, they who are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. The cross of Christ is the wonder of angels. It is the consolation of believers in this land of their pilgrimage. In the midst of temptations and sorrows, they "wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." The remembrance of his redeeming love will be the spring of their joy, the celebration of it will be their blessed employment, while eternity endures. Can a disciple of Christ crucified, ever lose sight of the scenes of Bethlehem and of Calvary?— No, it is impossible. Even now, though we see him not, it is permitted to us, through faith, to "rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory." How great then must be our delight, when we shall stand in his immediate presence, and behold him as he is! What heart can conceive, in this vale of tears, the sacred raptures with which the redeemed from among men shall walk the streets of the New Jerusalem; proclaiming, with the fervour of perfect holiness, and with voices of immortal vigour, "salvation to our God who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb:" "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

We must now conclude this discourse with a few practical inferences.

The first is, that we are bound to keep the doctrine of the cross constantly and sacredly in view, as the only sound basis of our missionary institutions. What is our avowed object in planning and conducting these institutions, and in executing the labours which they prescribe? It is no less than the eternal salvation of sinners. We have seen wherein this salvation consists, and that all its branches centre in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. The conclusion is irresistible, and abundantly illustrated by the history of missions, that in proportion as we adhere to this doctrine, and give it honour, or make light of it, and substitute our own inventions in its stead, we may expect success or the contrary in the great object which we profess to pursue.

Let the guardians of the church hear the word of respectful exhortation upon this subject. To you, brethren, in your Presbyterial capacity, is confided the power, under God, of committing the gospel "to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." It behoves you to be most vigilant in the discharge of this awful trust. Remember that it depends much upon you, whether the sacred office shall be filled by proud, covetous intruders, strangers to the love of God and abominable in his sight, or by men supremely devoted to the glory of God, and to the work of reconciling sinners to him through Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. The consequences of your conduct in this matter, are beyond all calculation. It is, no doubt, important to be satisfied that your candidate for the ministry possesses respectable talents for acquiring and communicating knowledge; and that his mind is improved by liberal education. But there is an inquiry of infinitely greater importance still; namely, is he a genuine disciple of Christ crucified? Before you authorise any man to preach the gospel, take care to ascertain, so far as you may, by all the diligence and all the means appointed in the scriptures, that in addition to the requisite natural endowments, he well understands the doctrine of the cross; that he glories in it as the joy of his heart, the foundation of his immortal hopes; and that in the work to which he aspires, it is his settled determination not to know any thing except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. If your candidate answers this description, receive him gladly to the fellowship of the ministry; not doubting that God will make him instrumental to his own glory, and a blessing to the world.

In the conduct of missions let the same principles be your guide. For the propagation of religion, its friends commit their bounty to your management. You are responsible to them and to God for the care with which you act, under so high a confidence reposed in you. Many of the people of God are dispersed abroad, destitute of the benefits of a settled ministry. To you they look up for "the bread of life;" and will you, instead of that bread, "give them a stone?" The heathen nations, on your frontiers, and even multitudes of your fellow-citizens, in what is called this Christian country, are perishing in their sins, grossly ignorant of the way of salvation. Send forth, then, as much as in you lies, the genuine gospel of Christ, the una-

dulterated doctrine of the cross. It was with this doctrine that the Apostles "pulled down the strong holds" of iniquity, and subdued thousands to "the obedience of faith;" notwithstanding the contempt of philosophers, the malice of priests, the oppression of tyrants, and the rage of the people. And, however, the doctrine of the cross may still be despised or opposed; however, God may, in some instances, withhold that powerful influence of his spirit, which is necessary to render the preaching of it effectual; we know that it shall advance in its blessed conquests, until the whole earth shall be subdued by it, and filled with its glory.

And you, beloved missionaries, the heralds of salvation to a lost world, the instruments of comfort and establishment to the scattered sheep of the flock of Christ; remember, at all times, how momentous is the work to which you are appointed. Let Christ be "in you the hope of glory." Let his honour, and the deliverance of the souls for whom he shed his blood, be the objects of your most earnest desire.— Let the doctrine of his cross dwell upon your lips, as the sum and substance of your message, both to saints and sinners. Far from your hearts be banished the love of filthy lucre; with the more subtle and pernicious thirst of popular applause. Bear it ever in mind, that you are not to "preach yourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and yourselves the servants of the people for Jesus' sake." Is it, indeed, your supreme purpose to employ your talents, your strength, and your lives in endeavouring to extend our Redeemer's kingdom, and to save immortal souls from destruction? Go, then, in simplicity and godly sincerity, to the honourable work assigned you. Carry the standard of the cross to the ends of the earth; and may the power of your master go with you and prosper your labours.

Our second inference is, that it is the duty and the privilege of all to give their aid in the promotion of evangelical missions.

It is taken for granted, brethren, that you acknowledge yourselves bound "to love your neighbour," to "do good unto all men as you have opportunity, especially to them who are of the household of faith." Are you required to give clothing to the naked, food to the hungry, and healing to the sick? And is it not incumbent on you to be engaged, with still warmer zeal, in promoting the eternal welfare of your fellow men? Think of the value of the soul; think of heaven and of hell. You perceive at once, that charity to the souls of men is as much more important than charity to their bodies, as eternity is more important than a moment. And how is this sublime charity to be exercised? By sending the gospel of Christ crucified, the precious doctrine which has been faintly delineated in this discourse, to every benighted region. Thousands, yea, millions of souls are every moment in danger of perishing forever through want of the gospel. We know that "without faith it is impossible to please God." Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

Do any imagine that sinners may possibly be saved without hearing the gospel at all? It is not intended to enter into the controversy upon that subject. We shall only observe, that it seems to be the

more scriptural opinion, that God will order things so as to afford the dispensation of the gospel to those whom he designs to make heirs of heaven; and that the most strenuous advocates for the possibility of salvation through an unknown Redeemer are compelled to admit, that the Holy Spirit very rarely, if ever, exhibits his converting and sanctifying agency by clear tokens, but in connexion with the preaching of the gospel.

Do you ask how you are to aid the great work of extending the influence of the gospel of Christ? We answer, first, by your constant and fervent prayers for a blessing on the missionary cause. And next, if the providence of God has enabled you, by your pecuniary donations also. They who preach the gospel have a right "to live of the gospel." This living, in the case of missionaries, can only be derived from the liberality of the friends of religion. And in vain will that man pretend to be its friend who refuses to bestow a portion of his stores for its advancement in the world. Jesus Christ gave his life a ransom for sinners: and shall we grudge our money when it is requisite for sending abroad the knowledge of his great salvation? Far be it from us to act so unworthy a part. But brethren, we do not mean to reproach you by this language. We deem it unnecessary even to insist largely upon your duty in the case; judging from past experience that your hearts and hands are fully ready at the call of this noble charity.

In giving your assistance to the propagation of the gospel, you are invited to the enjoyment of a very high privilege. Is it not most honourable to promote the welfare of others? Is not the consciousness of doing so a most delicious gratification to the heart which is animated by benevolence? How ardently should we thank God if he enables us to relieve the poor and the needy when they cry, to give consolation to the widow and the fatherless in their afflictions! How much more still are we privileged in being instrumental to the deliverance of souls from sin and hell, and to their preparation for immortal glory! Let the miser brood over his sordid and useless abundance. Let the voluptuary give himself up to his empoisoned pleasures. Be yours, brethren, a higher, a more delightful aim; that of sending out the preachers of the cross, to turn mankind "from darkness to light, and from Satan unto God." The united prayers and alms which you offer up to God this evening may be fruitful, you have strong reason to hope that they will be fruitful, in a harvest of souls redeemed from the earth to rejoice in the love of God forever and ever.

Finally, remember, that now, once more the word of salvation is brought to every individual of this assembly. Be not guilty, dear brethren, of the inconsistency of bestowing the gospel upon others and rejecting it yourselves. Harbour not for a moment the fancy that your pecuniary bounty, devoted to the salvation of your fellow-sinners, will be sufficient to secure your own; or that any thing which you may do to make Christ known to others can be substituted for your cordial acceptance of him as your Saviour, and submission to him as your King. He waits to be gracious to every one of you upon

your return to him, and claims your best affections as his right.— Come, receive the pardon which he offers you, purchased with his blood; and be blessed with all the blessings of his love. Beware, lest after having subserved the purposes of his grace to others, any of you should be found among his enemies at last. May we all stand before him in that day with exceeding joy, the trophies of his cross, the heirs of his glory. And to him, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all praise ascribed through endless ages. Amen.

— 1751200 —

THE CONVERTED JEW.

[The following incident actually took place in Great Britain a few years since. The re-publication of the statement at the present time, when efforts are beginning to be made to promote Christianity among the Jews, will not be deemed unseasonable.]

The instant we arose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the court-yard of the inn, opposite to the room where we were sitting, a Jew (as he appeared to be) with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door to inquire of him, whether he knew a man of the name of *Abraham Levi*, one of their people. ‘Yes,’ (he said) ‘I know him very well; but he is not one of my people.’ ‘How is that?’ (replied my friend) ‘are you not a Jew?’ ‘No,’ (the poor man said) ‘I thank the Lord I am not. I was once indeed; but I trust, I am now a lover of the Lord Jesus.’ The effect wrought upon my mind by this short conversation was like that of electricity. ‘Pray my friend, do us the favour’ (continued my companion) ‘to walk into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers, like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus; and we shall much rejoice, if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought.’ ‘That I will most readily.’ (replied the man;) ‘for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change to which I owe such unspeakable mercies.

‘Without going over the whole of my history from my childhood,’ (he said) ‘which has very little interesting in it, and is unconnected with the circumstances of my conversion, it will be sufficient to begin at that part which alone is worth your hearing. It is about two years since, that I first began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable state of our people. I discovered, from reading the Scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies, with which, from age to age, the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also, how, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people, the Lord had punished us. But what struck me most forcibly was that prophecy of scripture, *That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until the SHILOH should come.* Whereas I saw very plainly, that our nation was without a sceptre, without a government, without temple. I remarked moreover that our people were a light, and vain, and worldly-minded people, who

took it not to heart. And if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, ours deserved his displeasure more. Added to all these considerations which very powerfully operated upon my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God; and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, that SHILOH was come, and to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labour.

‘It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that, my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I paused as I stood on the bridge, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I cried out, O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who hast declared thyself as keeping mercy for thousands; look down upon me, a poor Jew, vouchsafe to teach me what I must do. Thou knowest my desire is to serve thee, if I knew the way. Thou art justly displeased with our nation and with our people; for we have broken thy commandments. But, O Lord, direct me.

‘It was with words somewhat like these,’ (continued the poor man) ‘that I prayed; in which I wept much. At length I walked on, and passing by a place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought with myself, but the Lord may have directed me hither. I went in, and near the door finding a seat unoccupied I entered into it, and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God, in sending his son to be the Saviour of the world. If this Saviour was my Saviour, I thought, how happy should I be! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept. And many times, during the continuance of the service, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain.

‘I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behaviour; so that, as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came towards me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt their worship with my drunkenness. But when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me, that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.

‘Not to fatigue you with my relation, it will be sufficient to observe, that from that hour my mind began to discover hope. And as the kind people, into whose congregation I had thus entered, undertook to instruct me in the principles of the Christian faith, I soon learnt, under God, the fulfilment of the Jewish scriptures in the Christian. And now I find cause every day, more and more, to bless the Lord for what he hath done for my soul.

‘One little event more,’ (he added) ‘I will, if you please, relate, which happened soon after my going into this church. My business of selling my pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt; and calling at a pastry-

cook's shop, who occasionally dealt with me; a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman, dressed in black; the mistress of the house stood behind the counter, and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably ill, came in for a tart.—“Ah! John,” (cried the old gentleman) what, you have left the infirmary.—Is your disorder declared to be incurable?” “Yes, sir,” (replied the poor man) “they say they can do nothing more for me.” “Well, John,” (answered the old gentleman) “there is one Physician more which I would have you try; and he never fails to cure. And he doth it also *without money and without price.*” The poor man's countenance seemed to brighten at this; and he said, “Who is he?”—“It is the Lord Jesus Christ,” (said the gentleman) “Pray go to him, John; and if he be pleased to heal your body it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed; and if not, he can and will heal your soul.” The poor man did not relish the advice; for he went away looking angrily. As for me I cried out, (for I could not refrain) “May the Lord bless you, Sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Saviour! he is indeed all you have described him, for he hath cured both my body and soul.” Astonished at what I said, the gentleman expressed his surprise in observing, “I thought you were a Jew!” “I was, Sir, (I answered) once; but by grace I am now a Christian.” He caught me by the hand, and entreated me to go with him to his house, where I related to him as I have to you, the means under God of my conversion. And when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer.—And oh! sirs, the fervour and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord's mercy to my soul, never shall I forget. The recollection, even at this distance, continues to warm my heart.

When the poor man had finished his narrative, my friend and I looked at each other, then at him, and then upward. One sentiment, I am persuaded, pervaded both our hearts; and this was the language, *Great and marvellous are thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY! Just and true are thy ways, Thou KING of Saints!*

My companion offered him money, at which he seemed hurt. “I am sorry (he said) that you should think so unfavorably of me.”—“Well but,” (answered my friend) “we have detained you from your employment, and it is but just; as you have so highly contributed to our pleasure, we ought not to make it detrimental to your interest.” “I should be very sorry” (replied the poor man) “if my diligence would not make up for those occasional interruptions, which are so sweet and refreshing in my own heart, while giving satisfaction to others. No, Sir, I thank you for your intentions; but I cannot accept of your offer. Besides, I need it not; I have enough and to spare. God supplies all my wants, and enables me sometimes to help the wants of others.”

The poor man took his leave, after mutual wishes and prayers for our spiritual welfare. And the night being now advanced, after reading the scriptures, and prayer, we departed each to his chamber.

Recorder.