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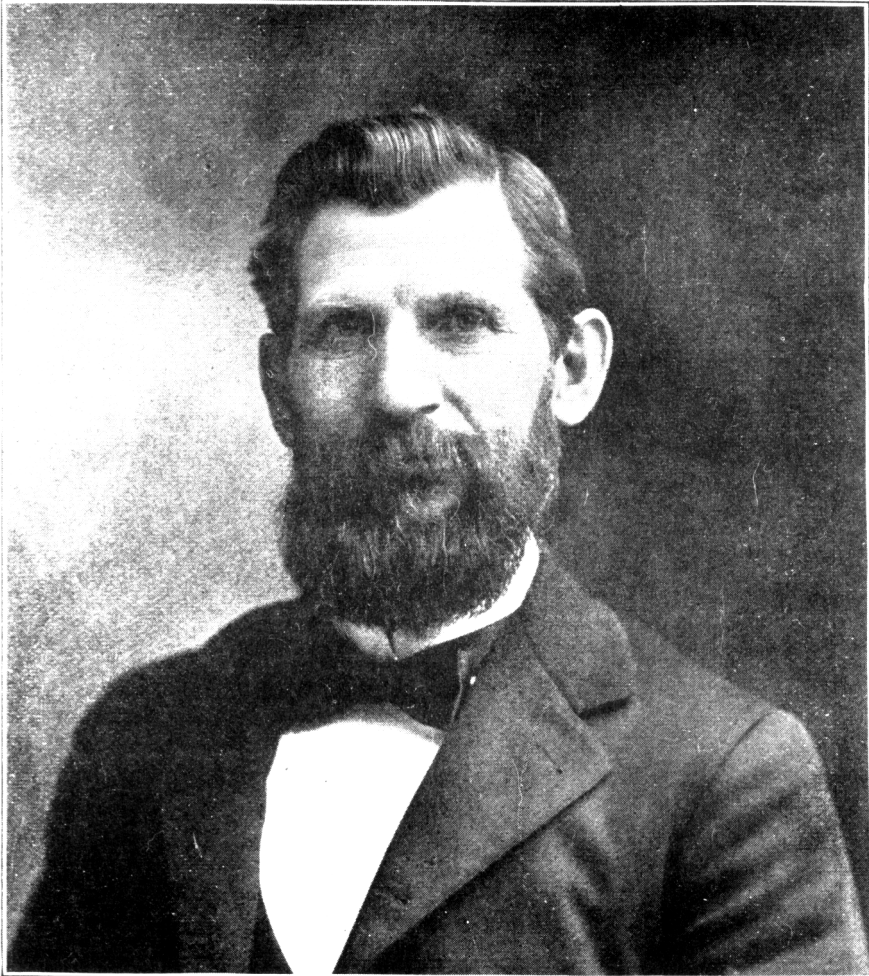
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R. P. MEEKS.

# AT THE FEET OF JESUS

OR

## TWENTY-FIVE SERMONS CONCERNING THE SAVIOUR

BY

R. P. MEEKS

WITH A LIFE-SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR, AND  
OF HIS FATHER

---

*"I determined not to know any-  
thing among you, save Jesus  
Christ, and him crucified."*

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NASHVILLE, TENN.  
GOSPEL ADVOCATE PUBLISHING COMPANY  
1900

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**R. P. MEARS.**



## DEDICATION.

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To my devoted life companion, who has ever been so helpful to me in my feeble efforts to learn and proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus; to my precious children, the joy and pride of my life; and to all young preachers of the ancient gospel—this book is affectionately inscribed by

THE AUTHOR.

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## PREFACE.

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It has been a conviction of the writer for several years that the basic idea of much of the preaching to-day should be shifted, at least somewhat. The Christ idea is not as prominent in the pulpit as it should be.

It is too common for abstract subjects to be discussed, and Christ either entirely ignored or left mainly in the background. We preach upon faith, hope, repentance, prayer, baptism, etc., and make only a passing allusion to Christ, the Saviour of men. To pursue this course, the minister holds up some abstract thought before the people, and what is said relative to Christ is just woven in incidentally—comes in by way of remark.

Love, works, joy, grace, etc., are important, but not so much so as “Christ and him crucified.” When preaching is what it should be, Jesus Christ is made prominent as the central thought of the discourse, and other matters are casually referred to in the course of remarks. Christ is the central thought of the entire Bible; the object of the Christian’s faith; the substratum of the Christian’s creed; the head of the church; the fulness of the gospel; and he should be the basic thought of pulpit efforts.

In this book my aim has been to call the attention of the young, especially young preachers, to the

life, sayings and influence of "the wonderful One," at least in a humble way. I desire to give them a faint idea of Jesus as he is revealed in the Bible, there being no pretension toward an exhaustive treatise upon the "Man Divine."

In the preparation of this work, it has been my endeavor to give "honor to whom honor is due." If at any time I have omitted the quotation marks, remember it has not been intentional. Besides learning all I could from the sayings and sermons of different preachers, I have read all I could easily obtain upon the line of thought indicated in this series of discourses. I feel especially indebted to the following: Geikie's "Life of Christ"; Canon Farrar's "Life of Christ"; Edersheim's "Life of Christ"; "The Person of Christ," by Philip Schaff; "The Christ of History," by Young; "The Temptations of Christ," by J. B. Briney; "Ecce Homo," and "The Divine Demonstration."

I now send forth this unpretentious little volume upon its mission of love, praying the Lord's benedictions upon its influence. Hoping the readers thereof may have at least a degree of the pleasure and profit enjoyed by the author in its preparation, it is respectfully submitted to the eye of the scrutinizing, but I trust sympathizing, public.

R. P. MEEKS.

*Henderson, Tenn., April 25, 1899.*

## LIFE-SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

---

While conducting a singing-school in the "sweet long ago," John Henderson Meeks espied among his pupils a blooming maiden of rare beauty—a charming singer. Ascertaining her name (Miss Eleanor Atkins—"Ellie"), he said to a friend, "*She is mine, if I can get her.*"

Time sped away. January 27, 1841, the twain were made one. This young couple proved of intrinsic worth to the community. With fine mental abilities and lofty aspirations, a lover and supporter of all that was truly great, *he* was appreciated most by those best acquainted with his inner life. *She*, with limited education, possessed a very strong and vigorous mind, and was endowed with many sterling qualities. With sweet, affectionate, cheery disposition, untiring energy, a beautiful combination of economy and liberality, and a skill in management not often equaled, she kept the home machinery in splendid "running order," at the same time finding many leisure hours in which to converse with friends and loved ones, entertain strangers, do deeds of charity, go to the Lord's house, visit and minister to the afflicted. They made monthly visits to the home of her parents, twelve miles distant—going horse-back, sometimes swimming a creek—until they had four children to carry—one in each lap, one tied behind each.

September 18, 1849, another child to them was given, when Rufus Polk Meeks, the subject of this sketch, first opened his eyes to nature's light. He was the fifth of eight promising children, the third of five noble sons.

His father was a prominent citizen, a systematic and prosperous farmer; but that did not mean his children should be reared in idleness and affluence. By the wise training of a loving, skilful mother, the girls were disciplined in the economies and industries of the day. The boys, under a kind father's oversight, were raised to regular, active labor on the farm, not to "*playing at work*"—a day's work then often meaning from 4 A. M. to 8 P. M. With unusually strong attachment for these objects of their love, the parents were largely instrumental in shaping their destinies. During the formative period of character, they, as children often do, considered their father a somewhat rigid disciplinarian; but as their judgments matured, they realized he was correct. Though firm and positive, he was kind and true, devoted to and appreciative of his children. That mother's quiet, gentle influence will also be felt by each throughout life. Some one has beautifully said, "The mother in her office holds the key to the soul; and she it is who stamps the coin of character."

While only a "wee laddie," Rufus fell into a deep spring; and his life was almost extinct when rescued by Linda, one of the servants.

Young Rufus was especially noted for five things: For being (1) bashful; (2) inquisitive; (3) awkward; (4) for saying all he thought; (5) for believing all he heard. He doubted nothing. Once when he went to mill, about three miles from home—one mile from the old Shiloh Church—and heard for the first time the rattle of an old-fashioned bolting-chest—a very noisy machine—he asked the miller, “What is it making that *fuss* in there?” The mischievous miller replied, “A few days ago we caught the devil and put him in there, and he’s knockin’ to git out.” The child believed it, went home, and gladly told his father they had “him up, down there at the mill.” You can scarcely imagine how much pleasure it gave the unsuspecting, credulous little boy to believe his majesty was *securely imprisoned, at last*.

The older children would often try to avoid his company in their meanderings, because he was sure, especially if asked, to disclose their misdoings. For instance, he would follow his sisters to the (forbidden) apple orchard, then call back, “Mother, the girls are *starting me to these green apples!*” Sometimes a crowd of neighbor boys would go into the creek early in the spring, against the better judgment of their parents; then, when interrogated, would either deny it or waive the question. An excellent neighbor, Bro. East, would say, “Just wait till Ruf comes, and we will hear the straight of it. Here, Ruf, have you boys been in the creek?” “Yes, sir,” would be the ready reply.

He was raised to industrious habits, never failing to make a crop until in his eighteenth year. At the age of eleven, he picked, one day, 201 pounds of dry cotton. His physical "make-up" indicated the wonderful strength for which, as a child, he was noted, being regarded as almost a "young Hercules." At matured manhood his height is exactly six feet, weight about 160 pounds.

In boyhood, his only school advantages were the "log-cabin universities," not even "meagerly supplied with the appliances of the present day." The sessions lasted about two months. At seventeen, just as happy boyhood was about to give place to stalwart manhood, he meekly yielded obedience to the truth under the plain, forceful preaching of Bro. R. W. Michie, at Clear Creek, two miles from home. While in his eighteenth year, he went to school ten months to Prof. B. H. Malone, at Pebble Hill Academy, two miles south of home. This was the first school in which he had any special advantages. Here was first kindled in his bosom a desire for an education and a life of more extended usefulness. It was here he made his first public speech. Seventeen years of his existence were among the "used-to-be's"; yet he had never even repeated "Mary Had a Little Lamb," "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," or "The Boy Stood on the Burning Deck." He was induced to enter the Pebble Hill Debating Society. The first subject discussed was, "Which Affords the Greater Pleasure, Country Life or City Life?" Young Meeks was chosen to make his virgin



speech upon *the pleasures of city life*. He says he had never seen a city; did not remember having ever read anything about a city; really, had met but few persons who had seen one. Was frightened almost "out of his wits." Of course, could think of nothing to say; in fact, knew nothing to say. Would try to speak; but his tongue would cleave to the roof of his mouth. Would try to spit; but his mouth was so dry he could not. Excited and trembling, after a few broken sentences he left the rostrum in disgust, mortified at his first public effort. Now often wishes for a copy of that wonderful (?) speech.

Next, he went to school four and a half months to T. B. Larimore, at Kendrick, Miss.; then, one session to the same man at Mars Hill, near Florence, Ala. Tireless in pursuit of education, he spent 1871-72 at Bethany College, West Virginia, then returned to Mars Hill. Altogether he was under Professor L.'s instruction five sessions, giving part of the latter sessions to teaching.

While at Mars Hill, he gained the heart of Professor Larimore's youngest sister, Mary; and there, September 18, 1873, "the powers that be" pronounced them *one*. He immediately took his bride to his father's house, where, being urged by his parents, they made their home five years, except during the first two sessions thereafter, in which they continued their school work at Mars Hill. Although in the house with his parents, as part of the family, five years, and within two or three hundred yards of them

eight years more, there was not the slightest unpleasantness between his father, mother, or any other member of the family, and his wife. They kept perfect mutual understanding. She says had it been otherwise the fault would certainly have been hers; for "any one wanting to do right could get along well with *them* without half trying." She furthermore says her memory is filled with living pictures of those happy moments and years, and the delightful association with those beloved parents, brothers and sisters—her relation to her father-in-law's family being included in the sweetest part of her existence. Moreover, concerning Mr. M.'s aged mother-in-law (now eighty-six), who has been a member of his family twenty years, he often says, "It will take some one better acquainted with her than I am to tell her faults." His tender regards for her are fully reciprocated.

Mr. Meeks began preaching a short time previous to his marriage. Since then, most of his work has been in the evangelistic field; and thousands have become obedient to the faith through his clear presentation of the truth. Part of his time he has given to congregations, doing monthly preaching in winter and spring, evangelizing during summer and fall. Once, having a monthly appointment thirty-five miles from home, he went to the same twenty-three times in succession, horseback, passing over and through eight creeks and muddy bottoms, sometimes almost swimming his horse.

Like most preachers, he has had some amusing, as well as some sad, experiences. In the early part of his ministry he was expected to be with Bro. James Locke in a meeting at Scott's Hill, Tenn. On the way he had an appointment, which unexpectedly resulted in a very interesting protracted meeting, making it seem his absolute duty to continue indefinitely. The brethren urged him to do so, to which he agreed, provided *they* would write Bro. Locke a satisfactory explanation. The excellent, but eccentric, old brother, on receiving the letter, bluntly said to the carrier, "You tell Meeks to go on, the way the devil directs him. If he begins to lie this early in life, I do n't know what he *will* do by the time he's as old as I am." Knowing Bro. Locke's peculiar mode of speaking, and knowing him to be a true, genuine friend, Mr. Meeks said to the offended young man, "That's all right—I *know Bro. Locke.*"

Again, on his way to a new place for a protracted meeting, he was introduced to a brother by the wayside, going to assist his father-in-law in killing a beef for the "big meeting." After a short interview with the young preacher the brother "went on his way"—not "rejoicing." He said to his father-in-law, "You need n't kill the beef." "Why?" "Because we're not going to have any meeting." "How do you know?" "I've seen the preacher; and, if *he's* the chance, we'll not have any." However, the beef was killed, and the meeting was a success.

During one of his visits to Florida, he and a young man went fishing out on the beautiful lake Ptsalo Apopka. They were very successful, and started home with a nice string of fish. On the way, somewhat mysteriously, but somehow, the fish were lost. On their return, the expert fishermen were asked, "Where are your fish?" The preacher, with a look of disappointment and somewhat abashed, replied, "*We lost them!*" A gentleman standing by said, "Bro. Meeks, I wish you would write out that statement and sign your name to it. I want to present it to my mother. To do so might reinstate me; for she *never would believe me when I said that.*"

It pleases Mr. M. to be called upon to officiate at the hymeneal altar. He delights in tying securely the famous "knot," provided it unites two appropriate and well-matched branches of the "true vine." One Sunday he went four miles, married a couple at 9 A. M., preached at 11, baptized four persons at 5 P. M., preached at 7, and, with joint ceremony, united two couples after preaching.

During the earlier part of his pulpit work, he had two "sideshow" debates, which were very diverting. He remained entirely self-possessed, however, throughout. One of them (at Adamsville, Tenn.) he followed the next year with a meeting which is still remembered as the "Steam Mill Meeting." There being then no house of worship there, he preached of nights in the school-house; but as it was occupied by the school during the day, Mr. Thrasher's saw-

mill was called into requisition. The shed was neatly and abundantly seated with new lumber. It being a very busy season, the sawing was carried on at lively speed from dawn till 10 A. M., when a peculiar, but satisfactory, kind of church bell (the sawmill whistle) called long and loud, and large, enthusiastic audiences quickly responded. The fire, having been practically extinguished, would sometimes revive, causing the water in the boiler to "sing" so loud as to interfere somewhat with the listeners. Mr. Thrasher would dash buckets of water into the furnace, thus silencing the music (?), which did not exactly harmonize with the preacher's voice. The good work continued two weeks, resulting in sixty-seven additions, about thirty of whom were decidedly on the other side during the debate.

On various occasions he has been "turned out" of a house in which he was permitted to begin a series of meetings. His advent would evidently throw the shepherd of the ecclesiastical flock sheltered by said house into a state of strange consternation. Forthwith he would call together his undershepherds, and, after "calm consideration, cool deliberation and careful calculation, without additional reflection or further procrastination, but with distressing perturbation," a note would be addressed to "R. P. Meeks," with the request, in unmistakable terms, that he preach in that house no more. Some of the ecclesiastical divines seemed to regard him as a stealthy, dangerous kind of wolf, trying to enter their fold to steal and devour their sheep

instead of feeding their lambs—said he was *proselyting*. Hence they determined he should be silenced. Submissive and meek as a lamb, he always yielded without a harsh word or a frown, quietly led his audience to some school-house, court-room, residence or arbor; and the result, almost invariably, was a good meeting.

In one instance (in Alabama) they simply crossed the road from the house. Forest trees furnished awning; buggies and wagons drawn into proper positions, and shawls and blankets spread on logs, furnished abundant sitting capacity; while mother earth kindly permitted them to use, as a pulpit, a portion of her lap overspread with a carpet of leaves, moss and wild flowers artistically woven by nature's great Architect. Good Sister Srygley, fearing the young preacher would feel somewhat discouraged by the buffeting, went to him in a motherly way, and, with a warm handshake, tenderly said, "Do n't be discouraged; *we 'll stand by you till the very last.*" And they did. He soon ceased to be discouraged by such treatment; for he found that "turned out" usually meant a good meeting and the upbuilding of the cause. ("All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.")

However, comparatively speaking, he has had but little of such *bitter* opposition. Although uncompromising in his presentation of the truth, he always treats those of "other persuasions" in such a manner as to soften the bitterness of their defeat. One of his friends, with different

religious views, once remarked, "Bro. Meeks can whip me the hardest, and make me feel the best while he is doing so, of any man I have ever seen." Would that space permitted me to tell of the kind treatment he has received from those who differ from him religiously—how they have tendered him their houses of worship, permitting him to protract his meetings therein, generously assisted in singing, and listened attentively to his preaching.

His chief object in preaching is to condemn sin in all its forms; to call souls from the traditions of men to the law of the Lord; to make a test of fellowship nothing that has not the divine sanction; to plead for Christian union *versus* denominational strife and names; to exalt Christ above party, and his word above human creeds. He spends no time relating ridiculous anecdotes—considers the soul's salvation too serious a matter to be converted into a jest. Feeling the pressure of solemn duty, and realizing that a world of starving humanity lies before him famishing for the Bread of Life, he is too conscientious to try to convert the Lord's house into a hall of amusement, or to spend his time roaming about through the driftwood and quicksands of idle speculation. With "feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace," and firmly planted upon the "Rock of Ages," he loses no time trying to ascertain what God was doing "before the foundation of the world"; neither does he feel **any** great concern as to the special form or shape of the inner man; nor does he spend much time

with "the spirits in prison," or investigating the claims of a *post-mortem* gospel. He thinks it is not so important to know all about the "intermediate state" as the *present state*. He insists that if we *live* right we are sure to *die* right; and God, in his appointed way, will take care of us after death. As he is not attempting an intellectual display, but trying to supply spiritual demands, he has long since learned not to be ashamed to say "*I do not know.*" He never preaches "Meeks," but carefully keeps him hidden behind the cross. Hence, when unkind darts of persecution are hurled at him, they strike the cross, rebound, and pierce the one who hurled them.

He has had but three homes—all in Tennessee: Where he was reared (in McNairy County), at Jackson, and at Henderson, where he now resides. January 4, 1888, he moved to this place, where, for several years, he was principal of the Bible Department of West Tennessee Christian College. During this time, a number of successful preachers went out from the institution. Tennessee, Kentucky, Texas, Louisiana, and other States, have been blessed by the labors of those taught and encouraged by him in the Bible Hall. He has held successful meetings in Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida. Most of his labors have been in towns and rural districts; but his pulpit efforts have also been received with marked approval in the *cities* in which he has preached.



His voice is not loud, but clear and smooth, and his articulation unusually good. His power in the pulpit lies in the clearness of his statements, his earnestness, the impressive modulation of his voice, and his way of constantly combating error, at the same time sparing the feelings of all; also in his marvelous familiarity with the Scriptures. He scarcely ever fails to give from memory, book, chapter and verse (or many verses) used in the entire course of his remarks. In holding meetings of weeks he has been known to quote all his proof-texts—which are indeed many—not once having to open the Bible.

As a child, he is a worthy son of noble Christian parents; as a brother, he is genial, companionable, and beloved by all; as a husband, faithful, attentive, and untiring in his devotions; as a father, kind, loving, and as indulgent as he thinks prudent, ever looking to the future happiness and well-being of his children—setting examples worthy of their imitation. He never uses slang, tobacco, intoxicants or kindred evils. Not long since, when he returned from an appointment, his little son said, “Papa, you have been smoking!!” “*Indeed I have not,*” the father replied. “Then you have been where some one else was smoking.” He had come home on the local, where two or three men were puffing their cigars, the fumes of which were readily detected by the boy. Frequently persons carry home with them indications of evil by associating with it, even though themselves are not guilty of practicing it.

As a citizen, he gives but little attention to politics, but is ever ready to lend his influence in raising the standard of morality and elevating the human race. As a Bible teacher, he seeks a higher plane than human speculation and opinionism; grovels not in the low grounds of idle controversy, where nothing of value is at stake, and where many brethren spend so much time in doubtful disputations. He is loyal to the truth; hence, of course, makes no compromise with error; but is conservative on controverted points of opinionism, thus keeping above the marshes of contention and dogmatism. He searches for absolutely safe ground, and tries to keep himself and hearers thereon while together they investigate different themes circling around the manger King, the uplifted cross, the open tomb, the risen and ascended Lord. He humbly realizes his responsibility, and is careful to not lose sight of his special theme, "*Jesus Christ and him crucified.*"

All three of his children—George Larimore, Ella Pearle and John Henderson—submissively hearkened to the gospel call in early childhood—the first at the age of eleven, the other two at ten. It was a sacred delight to the devoted father to baptize each of these precious darlings with his own hands. These fair buds of promise—all natural musicians, full of life, full of hope, full of sunshine—made the little home circle seem complete. The two younger, still lingering around the family hearthstone, cheer the hearts of loved ones, and are a source of untold satisfaction.

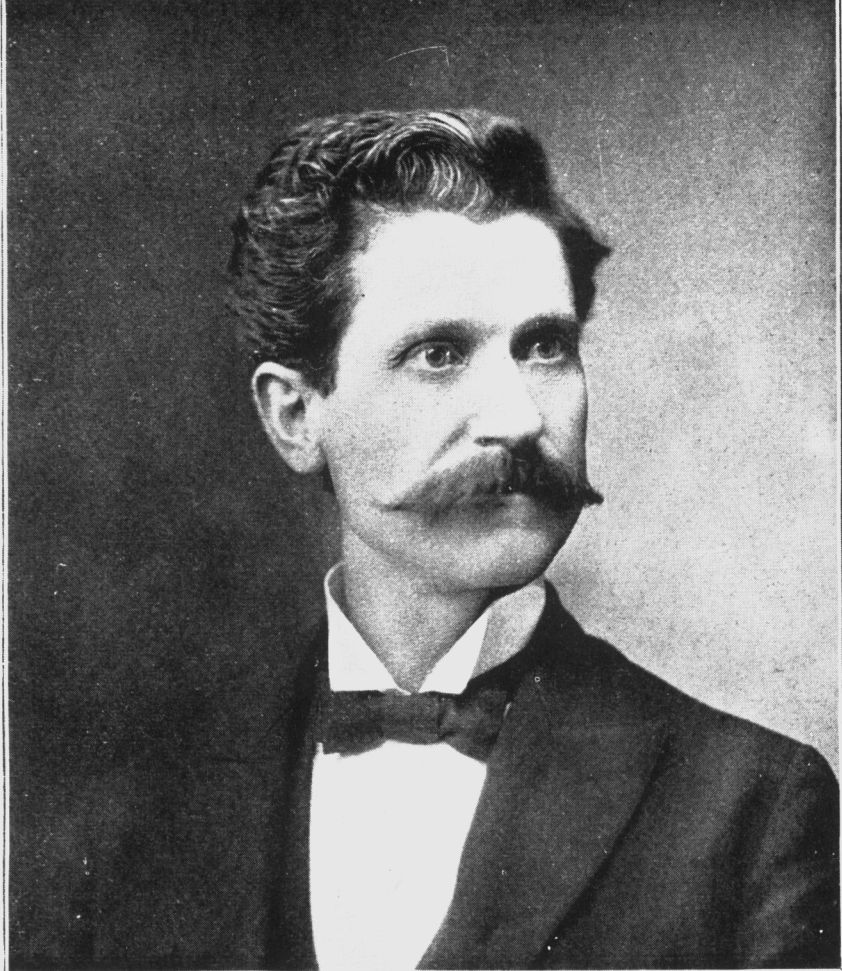
George L., having creditably completed the course prescribed in West Tennessee Christian College, spent one year in Kentucky University, studying the Bible, and taking a more extended course in higher mathematics and languages. He returned home in excellent health, and aglow with prospects of a useful life; but in less than a year—age nineteen—was taken from us—a victim of typhoid fever. His parents had bright anticipations concerning his future, especially because of his superior mental, musical and oratorical powers; but that dream of happiness was brief.

Since beginning to preach, Mr. Meeks has been deprived of a dear brother and sister—two brothers having died years before. Later still, his precious father and mother have passed through the gates ajar. The sun of their existence having glided athwart the skies, in their advanced age set in a halo of glory. Thus, this man of tender, affectionate heart has repeatedly “passed under the rod.” Though his life has been brightened by much sunshine, at times somber clouds have arisen, and, like palls of darkness, have overshadowed his heart. “Leaning on the everlasting Arm,” he has always looked upward, and by faith has been enabled to penetrate the dismal clouds and see the star of hope beaming with glory. To him this world has never seemed so bright since the death of his first-born. However, he still finds many, very many, pleasures in this life, though one by one they fade away as the shadows longer grow. As

the ties of earth are broken away, the circle of love in heaven grows larger.

He now has two living sisters and one brother—three brothers and a sister, as previously stated, having gone before. Two of them I knew, dearly loved and appreciated; and, from what I learn of the other two, the four living have no advantage, naturally, over the four who are dead. The sisters are pure and true, well located and favorably known in their native community, wives of high-toned, honorable and successful men, and staunch members of the Church of Christ. The brother, residing in Nashville, Tenn., is a man of rare powers. For eight years he was an eminently successful State's attorney, and is regarded as one of the very best lawyers in the State. The past winter and spring he was in the State Senate, in which honorable assembly he was a very useful and prominent factor. He has often been solicited to aspire toward Congressional honors, his many friends assuring him of easy success. He being the only living brother, and the two having been reared very much like twins, Mr. M. makes him one of a trio whose associations have been intimate and congenial for more than a quarter of a century, and whose pictures appear in this book. Hence the liberty of inserting *his* picture.

“At the Feet of Jesus” is Mr. Meeks' first effort to place anything before the public in permanent form.



M. H. MEEKS.

Those who read this sketch can not reasonably expect me to be wholly impartial after they ascertain that it is a little tribute of affection concerning the one on whose strong and willing arm I have leaned for twenty-five years—an arm all the while supported by strength and love divine. During this quarter of a century, with unity of faith and purpose, our *lives* have, as nearly as possible, blended into one. Therefore, I trust this imperfect tribute may be read in the spirit of *love* in which it has been written.

MOLLIE L. MEEKS.

## GENERAL JOHN H. MEEKS.

---

“I love to tell the story  
Of Jesus and his love,”

and exhort sons and daughters of men to become sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, and live as Jesus lived; but it is so easy for those who are not willing to walk in his footsteps to say, “*He was divine; we are human. Divinity can never do wrong. It is as human to err as it is divine to forgive. We should not be expected to be pure and gentle, long-suffering, merciful, forgiving, sympathetic, loving and kind, as was He.*” Moreover, those who talk thus are almost *sure* to act accordingly.

“I love to tell the story”

of prophets of God and apostles of the Lamb, to encourage men and women, boys and girls, to be “faithful unto death,” even as were they; but, then, the heart and life, if not the lip, so often reply, “*They were inspired; we are not. So much should never be expected of us. We are prone to err.*” Then such souls continue to practice what they preach, thus *proving* that they are, indeed, decidedly “prone to err.” These things being true,

“I love to tell the story”

of faithful men and women, boys and girls, of our own land and age, whose hearts are pure, records clean, and lives sub-

lime. Such was the heart, the record, the life of the hero of this sketch—a *modest* man of *almost* PEERLESS *purity*.  
That

“Lives of great men all remind us  
We may make our lives sublime,”

is true; and it is as clearly and as certainly true that genuine GOODNESS is an *essential element* of TRUE GREATNESS; hence the value of such a life as our beloved brother lived, and, consequently, of such a sketch as this one *ought to be*, time can never tell—eternity, alone, can reveal.

John Henderson Meeks, son of John and Martha Meeks, was born in Lincoln County, Tenn., September 27, 1814. He never knew a mother's love, his mother having died when he was only fourteen days old. He grew from babyhood to manhood in the household of his grandfather, Capt. John Henderson, of Revolutionary fame. He lived in Lawrence County, Ala., eleven years—from 1819 till 1830—at the close of which period, McNairy County, Tenn., became his home; and there he lived—*a light in the land*—all the remnant of his days.

Such was his grandfather's confidence in him, that, leaving a large estate, he made him the executor of his will, notwithstanding he had honorable, trustworthy sons much older than the grandson. The youthful executor “wound up” the estate so as to give perfect satisfaction to all concerned—a feat but seldom successfully performed, it is said. Such was the confidence justly reposed in him, that, from that day till the day of his death, he nearly always had that



kind of work on hand; and it is not known that he *ever* failed to give perfect satisfaction. Notwithstanding such work naturally and necessarily caused him to have much to do with law, lawyers and litigation, he *never* sued or was sued on his own account—NEVER.

A true, sympathetic and faithful friend, philanthropist and benefactor, those who knew him respected, loved and honored him—those who knew him best respecting, loving and honoring him most. He always promptly paid his own debts, and few ever failed to promptly pay *him*. He sincerely sympathized with suffering humanity, especially the poor. He never had a neighbor who was too poor to borrow money from him, if he seriously needed it. He had confidence in his fellowman, and that confidence was rarely betrayed or abused. Trusting God, he trusted man, and rarely had cause to regret it.

On January 27, 1841, he was married to Miss Eleanor Atkins, of McNairy County, Tenn. They lived together happily *fifty-five* years. She was a woman eminently worthy, in every sense, to be the wife of even such a man as he. To them were born five sons and three daughters—all worthy of the parents whom they loved, honored and obeyed. On June 20, 1896, Sister Meeks went away from home and loved ones here, leaving behind her a record free from blot or blur or blemish. From that dark day, our bereaved brother, sad and lonely, though his children **did all that affectionate children could** do, to make him hap-

py, seemed to be "waiting and watching" for her return; and, in the delirium of death, he repeatedly said, "I'm going to meet her; I'm going to meet her."

With never a preference for politics, and never a professional politician, but ever a faithful friend and pure patriot, he was constrained by hosts of friends to spend much of his life in the public service of his country. This he did, however, simply as a service of duty, in obedience to his country's call. He never sought office, but office often sought him. Being a signally successful farmer, devoted to home and loved ones, he greatly preferred the quietude of private, country life; but, between the years 1847 and 1855, he represented his county in the State Legislature twice, being the first Democrat who ever "carried" the county. The Whig majority was overwhelming when he consented to "enter the race"; but friends, forgetting politics and parties, *voted for the man*, and triumphantly elected him. Having completed his second term in the Legislature, he was nominated for the Senate, but declined to "run," and, like Cincinnatus of old, gladly turned from politics to the plow, having, like that marvelous old Roman, served his country in a public capacity till he believed his services were no longer necessary. He subsequently attended a political convention, to nominate his friend, John V. Wright, for Congress. To his astonishment—for he was too modest to ever be conscious of his own greatness, influence, popularity or power—the nomination, which meant

*election*, was enthusiastically tendered to *him*. *Accept it?* NEVER. He promptly, positively and persistently refused to accept it; having gone there pledged to another, and being too sublime a character to betray a trust or supplant a friend. It is thought, however, that possibly there *may be* a few men—politicians and preachers, probably—now living who, under similar circumstances, might be prevailed upon, by the powerful pressure of persistent persuasion, etc.—especially the etc.—to go to Congress and stay there; but General Meeks never belonged to that class. HE WAS A MAN.

In 1870, leading lights and legal lore of Tennessee were called together in Nashville as a “Constitutional Convention,” to make a Constitution for the Volunteer State. His home was my home then; and I am sure he never entertained the thought of *ever* entering the sphere of public life again. He had voluntarily retired from political life, and resolved to return to it no more. His word, not to mention other proofs, was proof enough of that. The importance of the work was such, however, that friends who loved their country said he *must* represent them and serve his State in that important crisis—a crisis that called for the wisest and best to succor and serve the State. Being pressed by their importunities, and convinced that duty demanded the sacrifice, he reluctantly and regretfully consented; but said, “This must and shall close my public career forever. I’ll serve you *this time*; but never again

—politically.” That settled that—settled it forever—and those who knew him knew it; hence when he had served them, his county and his country wisely and well, as an honored member of the “Constitutional Convention,” helping to give his native State a good Constitution, it was tacitly understood that he was to be allowed to rest till God should call him home. Thus closed the public career of *one* political character whose life was so pure and record so clean that *nothing* of a disreputable, or even questionable, character was *ever* charged against him. None dared to slander *him*.

When about twenty-seven years of his life—nearly one-third of it—had come and gone, he heard the gospel preached, in its primitive purity and sweet, sublime simplicity, and understood it perfectly. As he had, even then, for *twenty years*, longed to be a Christian, he was “almost persuaded” to obey the gospel then and there; but the contrast between it and what he had been hearing all his life, as a *substitute* for the gospel, was so striking as to shock and bewilder him; and, as he often testified, this and the confusion, division and strife among those claiming to be “born of the Spirit” and—*some* of them—“called of God to preach the gospel,” kept him out of Christ till five-and-twenty years more had passed away forever.

In 1866, the earnest, plain preaching and powerful pleading of R. W. Michie, one of the purest and best of

preachers, prevailed upon him to render the obedience he had so long postponed. Being then and thus and there “born again”—born into the church (family) of God—he thenceforth, as long as he lived in this world, was a consistent Christian, a great power for good, and, for thirty years, a respected and revered elder of the Church of Christ at Clear Creek, McNairy Co., Tenn.—one of the best and strongest churches in all this goodly land that we, with pleasure—not, of course, with pride—call *our* country.

He was no exception to the rule, “Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward”—a truly thrilling thought, that should make all thoughtful people “wondrous kind”; as, indeed, all true and faithful Christians are. Storms of sorrow sometimes swept down upon his tender heart and sympathetic soul. In the days of his childhood, he often wept because he had no mother. Seeing mothers caressing their children, and realizing that there is no other love like a mother’s love, he wept, as if his heart would break, because *he* had no mother. This may be one reason why, even then, he longed to be a child of God. Those who have mothers should appreciate them, and all responsible souls should be children of God.

His hospitable home—so lonely now—though the home of love and purity still—was *almost* in the Confederate line of battle when, at the dawning of the 6th of

April, 1862, the Shiloh battle began. From the beginning to the ending of all the gloomy hours of that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday, he heard the awful rumble, rush and roar of the terrific storm of dread destruction that swept relentlessly over the bleeding bosom of that fateful field of death; his only son old enough to bear arms being in the battle, and he not being permitted to go upon the field to find him, and not knowing whether he was well or wounded, living, dying or dead! Just as the sun set, his manly, namesake boy came proudly marching home, guarding prisoners of war. How the fond and faithful father and loving, longing mother of that brave soldier boy felt, "from the rising to the setting of the sun" of that eventful day, mortal man can never know till "the mists have cleared away." Nor can language tell the joy they felt when they beheld their brave, bright boy, neither scarred nor scared, emerging from the somber folds of the pall of smoke that shadowed that sad scene of death and desolation. When "our" cruel war was almost over—just before the "stars and bars" were furled forever—that fond and fearless father saw, on a bloody battlefield where *heroes* fought and fell, that same brave boy, far away from home and mother, *die*; the shot that killed him being the *last* shot of that sad day—"a shaft at random sent" from the depleted ranks of a brave, but beaten, foe in full retreat when the fatal shot was fired.

Our beloved brother's devoted, dove-like wife and half of their eight children—John, George, Orval and Margaret—preceded him to the tomb. His nature was such that the loss of the life of each of these dear, loved ones was more than the bitterness of death to him. Mattie, Rufus, Henry and Zilpah are living still—Zilpah, the baby, at the old home.

<sup>1</sup> Stronger than Sampson, braver than Cæsar, steadfast as Joseph, free from bad habits, and ever submissive to duty's demands, *he was truly a model man*. Sampson fell before the bewildering blandishments of artful, deceitful, dallying Delilah; Cæsar, before the bewitching beauty of lustful, coquetting, captivating Cleopatra; but the worthy subject of this short sketch, though as sorely tempted as were they, never fell. Once, and only once—between sacred trust and strong temptation—he hesitated, weakened, wavered, trembled, quivered and *almost fell*; but, like Joseph, he bravely escaped, with conscience clear and conduct clean. He never forgot that fearful fight 'twixt sinful lusts and love of right, and was ever thereafter stronger; as sturdy trees take deeper root because of the storms that rock them. These temptations never became topics for tattling tongues, or gab for Madam Grundy. Indeed, no report of them ever reached the itching ear of a scandal-loving public. Moreover, no breath of scandal ever assailed his character or tarnished his reputation. He was never slandered. In

this important respect, at least, he was far more fortunate than our own great Washington; than pure, imprisoned, peerless Joseph, and many millions more—millions whom Satan's servants have mowed down with the cruel scythe of slander—a scythe by none but Satan and his servants swung. He himself, however, sometimes modestly alluded to these things—revealing no name, of course—in conversation with close, confidential friends; hoping that, thereby, others might be blest; and I am sure he, if present with me now, would not only unhesitatingly and unreservedly approve my telling them to you, but would REQUEST me to do so, hoping, thus, to accomplish good.

It is believed by those who knew him best that he never had a bad habit; his nearest approach thereto being his taking one—and *only* one—chew of tobacco, when he was but a boy.

He was not only scrupulously neat in dress, and clean in conduct and in person, but always chaste in conversation. Modest as he was brave and true, profane, obscene or “smutty” language was disgusting and embarrassing to him. I was once a member of his harmonious, happy household many consecutive months, was intimately acquainted with him, and have been treated as a member of his family for almost a third of a century; and I am sure I *never*, in all the years that I knew him, heard him speak one sentence or utter one word that might not, with perfect propriety, be spoken in any pulpit or parlor, pub-



licly or privately, in the presence of the purest sons and daughters of our divine Father. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"; and his heart was pure. Since "none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," we all wield, whether willing or unwilling to wield it, influence, for weal or for woe, in life and in death; and influence we wield here shall last forever. How pure and chaste and clean and careful, then, each of us should be! His influence was good, and *only* good, and that continually. No mortal can truthfully say, "General Mecks influenced me or mine to use grog, tobacco, profanity, slang, obscenity"—to be or do or say *anything wrong*.

When he and his dear, blessed wife went away, they left, not only a bereaved family, but a bereaved community and hosts of bereaved friends, to deplore their departure. What may we reasonably expect to be the conclusion to which such a man shall come, when, almost in sight of the eternal shore, he carefully reviews his entire life? Our beloved brother answered that interesting question, though never propounded to him, repeatedly in the latter years of his eventful earthly pilgrimage. That answer, earnestly repeated only a few hours previous to his death, was this: "I can think of but *one* change I would make in my life, if permitted to go back to the beginning, with all the light and knowledge I now have, and live it all over again. *I would obey the gospel*

*twenty-five years earlier—as early as I could.* I regret that false teaching, confusion, strife and division in the religious world kept me out of Christ so long. I can not remember when I did not wish to be a Christian; but, for many years, I knew not how.” Thus did our dear brother feel and think and talk, when, lonely, way-worn and weary, old, revered, loved and honored, he reached the silent river, sat down on its bank, looked wistfully toward the other shore, and said, “*I’m going to meet her.*”

He and his son Henry rode to Stantonville, two miles from his home, on the morning of July 22, and returned about 10 A.M. About 10:30 he said he was not feeling very well. A few moments later, he told Henry it was *death!* Henry said, “Oh! no, father, you are excited.” He said, “Why, Henry! *I am not afraid to die!*” His son replied, “I know that, father; but you think you are sicker than you are. You’ll be better by morning.” He, with characteristic emphasis, simply said, “*You’ll see;*” and thus the conversation closed. About twenty-two hours after he said to Henry, “*It is death,*” he ceased to breathe, his last words being, “*I’m going to meet her.*”

On Sunday, July 24, in the presence of an immense audience of bereaved, sorrow-stricken friends and loved ones, he was buried at Clear Creek—where he obeyed the gospel; where, for more than thirty years, he had

worked and worshiped with the saints; and where his wife and half his children had been buried while he mourned and wept. His Friend and Brother,

T. B. LARIMORE.

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Since completing the foregoing sketch, I have received and read a beautiful tribute to the memory of our beloved brother, from the pen of his illustrious, life-long friend, John V. Wright, from which I cull the following thoughts:—

“I knew him intimately and well from the days of my childhood to the day of his death. To him, more than to any other man, was I indebted for good advice, honorable example, and substantial aid in meeting and overcoming the obstacles which beset us on every side. I was not the only recipient of his favors. He was distinguished for his attention to young men; and was ever solicitous for their welfare.”

“I have submitted to his advice, and even to his earnest censure, with the resignation and respect with which an affectionate son hears the word of his father; and, in all my life, unworthy of his care as I may have been, I have never failed to profit by following his advice, or to suffer when I have disregarded it.”

“His departure leaves many an aching heart which feels, that in all the years to come, so true, tried and faithful a friend will not appear again. Of him it may be truly said, he was friend, not of fortune. but of men.”



T. B. LARIMORE.

“ His great desire was to serve his fellowmen, to aid the honest struggler to rise, to encourage the young to worthy actions, and to shield the lowly battling against the strong.”

“ He never envied or despised the rich, or scorned the low and worthy. Prosperity served only to widen the sphere of his sympathies and make him as generous in action as he was in thought.”

“ He was the possessor of that high sense of duty whose soul sincere fears God, and knows no other fear. General Meeks was not only a good man and a pure Christian, but he was a truly great man. If I have ever, in all my life, known a man in whom I could see *no* fault, that man was the subject of this letter. General Meeks had no bad habits.”

This is simply a sample of the voluntary testimony, *gladly given*, of a *great* man who knew our brother almost as he knew himself.

T. B. L.

# AT THE FEET OF JESUS;

OR,

## TWENTY-FIVE SERMONS CONCERNING THE SAVIOUR.

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### SERMON I.

THE CHRIST IDEA—IN PROPHECY AND HISTORY.

JOHN V. 19.

Opening the door of creation, it is evident the idea of God has existed since “the beginning.” Ever since the worlds were flung from his fingers, his handiwork has been manifest in the rock-ribbed earth, and his face has been seen in the sky. The Christ idea upon earth seems first to appear in Gen. i. 26, where God said, in the evening of creation, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”—the *us* doubtless having reference to the Trinity. Like the coming of dawn, the idea of a Saviour is gradually revealed in the Bible. While the Christ idea might be considered from the view-point of the Messianic promises, the sacrifices, the types and shadows, etc., we desire now to study it in the light of Christ in prophecy and history.

This course of thought has been very helpful to me, and I trust will be as much so to at least some of my

readers. It has strengthened my faith in the Saviour's claims. It is a line of study in "Christian Evidence" which occurs to me to be unanswerable.

There is a marked difference between prophecy and history. Prophecy is telling what *will be*, and history what *has been*. Harmony between the two tends to prove the prophecy divine. Suppose that in A. D. 1800 some one should have written a book of prophecies relative to the Civil War; should have told the year of its beginning, also the time of its close. Suppose he should have given the cause, or causes, of the war; mentioned some of the main battles; stated which side was victorious; and also given the condition of the country from the close of the war until the present. Any one reading that book of predictions now, and seeing how minutely time has fulfilled each prophecy, would be forced to the conclusion that the one who wrote said book was directed by divine power. Just so, when we see from a critical study of both the Old and New Testaments how beautifully and perfectly the Christ of prophecy harmonizes with the Christ of history, we readily conclude the Bible statements relative to Jesus of Nazareth are true, and he is of divine origin.

I. The time of Christ's coming was clearly foretold.

(1) His reign was to be in the *last days*. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the

mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isa. ii. 2). (See also Joel ii. 28-32.) The apostle Peter claims the transactions of Pentecost to be a fulfilment of these prophecies (Acts ii. 16-21).

(2) Christ's kingdom was to be established during the fourth universal monarchy, or during the Roman supremacy. Daniel, when doubtless referring to the Cæsars, said: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (Dan. ii. 44). The kingdom alluded to must be the kingdom of Christ, which was inaugurated during the reign of the Saviour, who was born about the time there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed (Luke ii. 1).

(3) Jesus was to come in the fulness of time. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. iv. 4). In many ways the world was ripe for the coming of the Son of man when his birth was announced to the shepherds upon the plains of Judea. Frequently I have been caused to wonder why it was so long from the introduction of sin until the coming of the Saviour of sinners—why Jesus did not come to destroy sin while it was in its infancy—why he did not come to destroy the works



of the devil before they became so deeply rooted in the human race. I now think I see divine philosophy in the long delay of the Saviour after the birth of sin in Eden's garden. Speaking reverently, God could not save man until he was convinced he could not save himself. He must feel his entire dependence upon a higher power before he is in a proper condition to be saved. Man would not appreciate divine salvation until he had exhausted *his own* resources. Hence, Paul says: "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6). Man has three sources of power: physical, **mental** and moral. **It** took near four thousand years to convince man he could not save himself.

(a) It seems the first effort man made was to save himself by his physical power. Some men love to boast of their physical strength. There were giants in the morning of time (Gen. vi. 4). The race probably grew to maturity more slowly than now, and had more physical strength. It was very likely demonstrated man could not save himself by physical power in Genesis (xi. 1-9)—the Tower of Babel.

(b) His next endeavor was to rescue himself through the power of mind. Some take much pride in their mental ability. Man can well afford to be proud of his mental achievements, and for them should be profoundly grateful. The imagination can scarcely outstrip man's efforts in the field of mental endeavor. While the mind has achieved

much, and will doubtless accomplish more, it has never devised a scheme of redemption for man, nor will it ever do so. Some seem to think it can; and hence criticise God's plan, by claiming he requires too much, too little, or at least that there are non-essentials in the conditions of pardon, etc.

That man unassisted can not find out God is confirmed, first, by Grecian philosophers. Socrates and others grappled with the questions of the immortality of the soul and human redemption. They remind one of so many giants struggling through the darkness—now and then catching a gleam of light, which doubtless comes either directly or indirectly from the pages of revelation. Next, it is taught by Paul in the following passages: “Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To the unknown God. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you” (Acts xvii. 22, 23). Athens, remember, was the most renowned seat of learning and literature of the ancient world. If the Athenians, who were proverbial for their culture, knew not God, who could know him alone by wisdom? No one; for Paul again says: “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I. Cor. i. 21).

(c) Man's last effort was to work himself into divine favor alone by deeds of righteousness. Morality is not sufficient. However, some seem to be calculating on reaching heaven upon the ladder of morality. Morality is a stepstone to Christianity, but is not Christianity. No one can be a Christian without being moral, but any one can be moral without being a Christian. It is confirmed that Hebrew legalism is not sufficient, by Titus (iii. 5).

Man's physical, mental and moral resources being exhausted, it is now evident he can not save himself. Feeling his dependence, he is now in a condition to be saved. At this particular juncture in the development of the scheme of redemption, Christ came as the world's Redeemer. Hence, as Paul says, he came "in the fulness of time." Therefore, in the four thousand years intervening between the transgression in Eden and the coming of Christ, great problems were being solved; such as man's inability to save himself, the exceeding sinfulness of sin, etc., etc.

II. The place of Christ's birth was foretold. Not only is the time of his coming minutely given, but one of the minor prophets mentions the very place in which the manger King was born. (Micah v. 2.) This statement is very specific. This prophecy can not refer to any human ruler, for his "goings forth were from of old, from everlasting." By the Jews the prediction was applied to Christ. When Herod assembled the chief priests and scribes, and asked them where Jesus should be born, they replied, "In Bethle-

hem of Judea," and then gave the passage from Micah (Matt. ii. 4-6), showing conclusively they regarded the whereabouts of the Saviour's birth as being the fulfilment of prophecy.

III. Christ's character is portrayed by the Jewish prophets:

(1) The obedience of Christ is forecast in Deut. xviii. 18-20. The prophecy is fulfilled in John vi. 38; xii. 49; xv. 15, and in the general tenor of his life.

(2) According to Ps. xlv. 7, which certainly has under consideration Jesus and his reign, his love of righteousness is foretold. To see the fulfilment of this in the life of Christ; we have only to take our stand upon the banks of the Jordan, and hear him say to John the Baptist, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He was ever ready to do his Father's bidding. In harmony with this, I believe his first recorded utterance is: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

(3) The great evangelical prophet predicts his wisdom in the following graphic language: Isa. xi. 1-4. This prediction was verified, first, in the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon has astonished the nations. It was delivered by a young man only about thirty years of age. So far as we know, Christ never had what the world would call advantages. He never had access to any voluminous libraries. He had not been favored with the instruction of learned professors in ancient lore. Yet the sermon has been re-

garded as a model by the best thinkers of different ages. The sermon is revolutionary in its scope and thought. It meets Hebrew formalism with the sharp lance of spiritual insight and discernment. It looks not so much on the outward appearance, as into the deep recesses of the heart. It does not consider man as *man* sees him, but as *God* beholds him. It is not so much concerned about man's reputation as his character.

Again, Christ's wisdom is displayed in his parables. It occurs to me that the stamp of Omnipotence is almost as clearly seen in the parables of Christ as in his miracles. They are so simple, yet so sublime. They are usually quite easy to comprehend; and yet it is very difficult to take in their entire sweep. At first, they impress one as being easy to construct; but later it becomes evident that human wisdom, with all its advantages, can not approximate one of them in point of production.

Furthermore, the Saviour's wisdom is manifested in his wonderful knowledge of human nature. Our hearts are open books in the sight of the Lord. He is able to promenade the aisles of every heart, and listen to the secret ponderings of the same. When certain of the scribes said Christ blasphemed, "Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matt. ix. 3, 4). The Saviour demonstrated that "he knew what was in man," in his conversation with Nicodemus. He seems to have anticipated the object of the learned Pharisee, and

answered him accordingly. It was not at all necessary for any one to tell him the woman at the well had had five husbands, and was then living in adultery. (John iv. 17, 18.) He knew her life. He touched the spring which enabled her to know he was well acquainted with her past history.

(4) The compassion of Jesus engaged the attention of the prophet. (Isa. lxi. 1-3.) In seeking the confirmation of this prophecy, go first to the tomb of Lazarus and see his sisters weeping over the death of their brother; and remember it is said in the same connection, "Jesus wept." Listen to his lamentation as he beheld the sad fate of Jerusalem from afar, feelingly expressing how often he was desirous of folding her unfortunate inhabitants under his sheltering wings, but they would not. His sympathy is again manifested in the prophecy which he read while in Nazareth. (Luke iv. 16-21.) Then, the character of Christ is so beautifully and accurately portrayed by the prophets.

IV. Many of the main events in the life of Jesus are minutely predicted.

(1) His triumphant entry into Jerusalem was a subject of prophecy. (Zech. ix. 9.) The account of the fulfilment is recorded in Matthew xxi.; John xii. 12-16.

(2) It was stated, "The blind shall see" (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6). Matthew and John tell us it came to pass during the Saviour's sojourn here. (Matt. xv. 30, 31; John ix. 1-7.)

(3) Isaiah says, "He is despised and rejected by men" (Isa. liii. 3-5). This is all clearly exemplified in his life as given in the New Testament.

(4) It was furthermore foretold that Christ should be sold. (Zech. xi. 12, 13.) In this case, prophecy and history harmonize in the following particulars: (a) That Christ would be sold; (b) what they would receive for him; (c) and for what purpose the money would be used.

(5) Jesus was to be spit upon. (Isa. l. 6.) In Matt. xxvi. 67 this vile treatment at the hands of the enemy is revealed. It is wonderful to see how many events in his life engaged the attention of the prophets. His career touched the prophetic lyre, and caused a song to resound along the line of the centuries, which has been the astonishment and admiration of the circling ages.

V. The crucifixion and burial of Christ were predicted.

(1) The Psalmist David, one thousand years before the event transpired, made the prophetic statement that Jesus was to be crucified. (Ps. xxii. 16.) One of the most remarkable things relative to the statement is that crucifixion is a Roman, not a Jewish, mode of punishment. Just think of it—the sweet singer of Israel, standing ten centuries back the stream of time from the cross, raises the veil from the brow of the future, and by divine power foretells the crucifixion of Jesus, the Son of God. Need I raise the question whether this prophecy has been fulfilled? Go ask the venerable dead. Call forth Peter, James and John,

Mary, and others, from the sleep of ages—ask them if David made a correct statement relative to the crucifixion; ask them if Jesus died upon the Roman cross. Listen attentively to the answer as it rends the air, and makes the welkin ring: “We, with many others, saw him bow his head upon his aching breast, while hanging upon the accursed tree, and heard him say, ‘It is finished.’ We saw the wonderful sympathy of the universe manifested when the Saviour died. The sun refused to shine, the earth from center to circumference shook, the solid rocks and vail were rent, and all nature was dressed in mourning, because Christ was dead, and the world was left an orphan.”

(2) David furthermore predicted that his garments should be parted, and for his vesture they would cast lots. (Ps. xxii. 18.) The account of the verifying of this prophecy is found in John xix. 23, 24.

(3) By prophetic insight, the Psalmist goes more into the minutia of the matter, and even gives expression to the very cry which would escape the Saviour’s lips in the dying hour. (Ps. xxii. 1.) That Jesus did so cry in the struggle of death is confirmed in the following: “Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (Matt. xxvii. 45, 46). This is to my mind the most mysterious recorded utterance which ever fell from his precious lips. The God-man, lying in the twilight of two worlds, when the



clouds gathered thick and fast about him, while he was bearing upon his own bosom the sins of humanity, spake as though he thought God had turned from him, and had forsaken him, leaving him without a friend! Peter denied him; all the apostles "forsook him and fled"; and now, while struggling with death—fighting a battle for Adam's race—which was the culmination of the Father's love—he asked the God of the universe why he had forsaken his only begotten Son. Why? oh why? and echo answers, Why? The reason for the question will probably be better understood when we reach our Father's house.

(4) Isaiah states that Jesus is to be numbered with transgressors. (Isa. liii. 12.) By consulting Matt. xxvii. 38, we see such was the case. "Then there were two thieves crucified with him; one on the right-hand, and another on the left." Examine parallel passages.

(5) Christ's grave was to be "made with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" (Isa. liii. 9). Though poor in birth and life, yet he was to be buried in the rich man's tomb, although upon borrowed ground. According to the testimony of Matthew and John, his remains rested in the grave of the wealthy and prominent. (Matt. xxvii. 57-60; John xix. 39-42.)

VI. Christ's resurrection and ascension were foretold.

(1) The predictions relative to his resurrection are given by Isaiah and David. (Isa. liii. 10, 11; Ps. xvi. 8-10.) The

fulfilment is recorded in Matt. xxviii.; Mark xvi.; Luke xxiv.; John xx.; Acts ii. 29, 30; also in I. Cor. xv.

(2) The prophetic statements relative to the ascension of Jesus are found in Ps. xxiv.; lxxviii. 18-24. The fact of his ascension is recorded in Acts i.; Eph. iv. 8; Phil. ii. 9-11.

From this unparalleled harmony between prophecy and history, we conclude that the record is divine; and hence Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

## SERMON II.

### THE GENEALOGY AND BIRTH OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW I. 1-25; LUKE II. 1-20; III. 23-38.

Having viewed the Saviour in prophecy and history, we will now consider especially his genealogy and birth.

By Christ's genealogy we mean his race-line. There are only a few individuals, comparatively, whose ancestors can be traced back more than three or four generations; but it is our privilege to follow the lineage of Christ, by the assistance of revelation, through the winding centuries of four thousand years to the beginning of the Adamic race. The sentence of exile from Eden's garden had scarcely been pronounced, when the glorious promise was made that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and win for man a brighter Eden than Adam by transgression lost. The whole Bible is only fulfilling and applying that promise. That the world might know that the promise was kept, God instituted the genealogy of the Saviour, reaching from Eden's gate to the manger. Then Christ's race-line or chain has one end connected with the shady bowers of paradise, when time was young, while the other rests upon Mary's bosom in the manger.

I. The genealogy of Christ is recorded in Matt. i. 1-17; Luke iii. 23-38.

(1) His genealogy from Adam to Noah is found in Gen. v. 3-32. Here ten links in the chain are given, commencing with Adam, and closing with Noah. Read and become familiar with the fifth chapter of Genesis—it is interesting history. It begins the account of the race-line of the grandest personage who ever walked, talked and sympathized with our own lost race.

(2) Christ's lineage from Shem to Abraham is recorded in Gen. xi. 10-26. In this Scripture we have recorded ten more links in the chain, reaching down to faithful Abraham. Now we stand with the twentieth ancestor of Jesus from Adam; and the history of this immortal twenty embraces a period of more than two thousand years.

(3) Then after Abraham we have Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Pharez; and the names from Pharez to David are given in Ruth iv. 18-22. Ruth seems to have been written to mend the chain—to connect Judah with David. Had it not been for the beautiful story of Ruth, two or three links of this very important lineage we are considering would possibly have been lost, at least from the Old Testament record.

We have now passed over thirty-three links in the chain, reaching from the progenitors of our race down through Noah, Abraham—to David, Israel's sweetest singer. We find ourselves in company with the greatest bard among the Hebrews, who had his harp tuned to the melody of many

**songs.** Standing here with the thirty-third ancestor in the royal line, let us take our bearing for the future. In company with David—the Hebrew psalmist and prophet—listening attentively, we hear the first faint whispers of redemption’s song in the promise to the banished pair. (Gen. iii. 15.) Lingering longer, the song becomes louder and louder, as we come down the line of the centuries, until we reach the reign of David, when the song of the Lamb peals forth in one continuous strain. Leaving these days as we descend the billowy stream of time, the strain seems louder, still louder, until it breaks forth in swelling tones, like a mighty orchestra, from Calvary’s brow.

Turning to Matt. i. 6-17, we find recorded the names of those in the race-line of the Saviour from David to himself. To the skeptic there is a discrepancy between Matthew and Luke in tracing the lineage of Christ from David to the manger King. Might it not have been that Matthew was considering the royal line, while Luke was tracing the blood line? Quite likely the line divided in the house of David into two distinct lineages—one from David to Nathan, etc., carrying down the blood; the other from David to Solomon, etc., bringing down the crown, and placing it upon the head of the rightful heir. For is it not generally conceded that Jesus was the rightful heir to the throne of his father David? So, probably, by the paternal and maternal lines the crown and blood meet in the Christ of God, who is the central thought of the entire Bible.

Jesus Christ is the "backbone" of the Scriptures—the heart of the word of God. He stands, like a mighty giant, in the midst of the ages, and, with one hand reaching back to the morning of time, strings upon that arm the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament; with the other he reaches forward to the Isle of Patmos, and strings upon that arm the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Standing there, Christ holds up the entire Bible, breathing into it his spirit of peace and good will, and linking it together with his testimony, which is the spirit of prophecy as well as sacred history. Well might he teach his disciples at Cesarea Philippi that upon his own divinity he would build his church, which would bid defiance to the powers of Hades. (Matt. xvi. 13-18.)

II. The birth of Christ is recorded in Matt. i. 18-25; Luke ii. 1-20. We are now situated in Bethlehem of Judea, the birthplace of Christ, the Son of God. Let us lay aside our shoes, for the ground upon which we stand is holy. We are approaching one of the most important events in the annals of the world. The voice of the prophet has directed us to Bethlehem. The shepherds are watching their flocks, while feeding upon the slopes of the green hills not far away. The stars, like chandeliers, are lighting up the heavens, while the pale moon is bending far o'er the sea. While night is wrapped in the garb of nature's stillness, waiting for the coming of dawn, the heavens become resplendent with the glory of God, and the angelic host appear, chant-

ing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Well might the angels chant, the stars sing, the earth rejoice; for the Child of promise and prophecy has come—the expected King, the world's Redeemer, is born. With what interest we read the history of distinguished men's birth. How we love to linger around the birthplace of the great, converse with those who knew them, and gather inspiration from their lives of sacrifice and toil. Then with ecstatic delight we should ramble through Bethlehem, remain at the cradle, bend over the babe in the manger, until we catch the lessons of pleasure and profit which are found in the brief account of the story of his mysterious birth.

There are incidental lessons found at the manger, to some of which I now direct your attention. Reader, preparatory to what is to follow in this discourse, examine carefully Luke ii. 8-20.

(1) Jesus was first revealed to the world by *language*. "The angel *said*"—spoke.

(a) It is thus throughout the New Testament. So far as I know, the Bible fails to mention an instance of Christ being revealed to the human heart without the use of language. Reader, has Christ been revealed to your heart? If so, how did you become acquainted with him? It must have been in one of three ways: Either by direct communication, as one man speaks to another; by some heavenly messenger conveying the intelligence; or by a letter being

sent to you from God. Certainly no one will claim that his knowledge of the Saviour has come through a direct communication. If so, please tell us how the intelligence was conveyed. Has any one come down from the skies, and made Jesus known to your heart? I think no one will claim that. Then, if God has not spoken directly, and if no heavenly messenger has imparted the information concerning the preciousness of Jesus Christ, the knowledge of the Saviour must have come through Heaven's letter, the Bible. All we know of Christ Jesus the Lord comes either directly or indirectly through the Scriptures of divine truth.

(b) The intelligence relative to the soul's salvation is not revealed by a direct operation of the Spirit. I know many contend the information is thus imparted; hence the many petitions for God to send down the Spirit with convicting and converting power. I never pray God to send down his Spirit. To do so is to confess the Spirit is not here. But the Spirit is here, and has been for more than eighteen hundred years; for Jesus promised his disciples, if he departed, he would send it, and it would abide forever. It is true the Holy Spirit has made Jesus known to many a heart, but always through the Word, the gospel. Oh, "the old, old story"—how many souls have been made happy in a Saviour's love by its message.

(c) So far as I know, the church for eighteen hundred years presents no exception to the rule of Jesus being



revealed to the world by preaching or teaching. Hence the importance of preaching the ancient gospel. That is the reason I am trying to write to you in my feeble way. That is the reason we want it preached in every nook and corner of the various States of this glorious Union. That is the reason we desire it sent across the sea, so the story of the glorious gospel may be poured into the benighted heathen's ear, turning him from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Thank the Lord for the God-given message, which has made Christ precious to many a weary pilgrim of time.

(2) Notice the directness of the message. "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke ii. 10, 11). There is born unto *you*—the message is from heaven, and peculiarly direct. Directness in preaching is a very important feature. Too many of us fail to make our audiences feel we are speaking to *them*. We fail to get in close touch with our hearers. No doubt one secret of Sam Jones' success is the directness of his speech. Hard, indeed, is that individual who can hear him preach, and not be forcibly impressed with the thought, "The message must have been intended especially for *me*."

Sinner, Jesus died for *you*. He is a personal Saviour, and feels a decided interest in the salvation of every one.

If every child of sin and sorrow could fully realize that Christ Jesus sympathizes with “*me*,” that he died for “*me*,” methinks the wheels of Zion would move on faster and faster toward the consummation of the world’s redemption.

(3) How explicit the instruction as to *when* and *where* he will be found. “For unto you is born *this* day in the *city of David* a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” Not, there is born unto you this century, this decade, this year, this month, nor even this week, but *this very day* there is born unto *you* the Christian’s advocate and the sinner’s friend. God always speaks specifically—he does not deal in generalities. The angel, in telling Cornelius how to find the apostle Peter, who was to bring to the Gentiles the message of peace, said: “Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter; he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the seaside” (Acts x. 5, 6). Mark how specific the instructions. There may have been many a man in Joppa whose name was Simon. But this Simon’s surname was Peter. There may have been other men there whose name was Simon and whose surname was Peter. But this Simon was dwelling with one Simon a tanner, whose house was by the seaside. It seems there was no possible chance to misunderstand the instructions.

(4) We must find the Saviour *where* God reveals him, and the *one* he reveals.

(a) Suppose the shepherds had gone to Jerusalem instead of to Bethlehem, had selected a *man* and not a helpless babe, they would not have found the Saviour.

(b) We must accept the Saviour revealed to us in the Bible, who is one of love, purity, humility, compassion, obedience, tenderness and self-sacrifice. Many desire a Saviour who will permit them to do almost anything—to cheat, defraud, lie, steal, practice dishonesty, be “stingy” with the Lord’s money; in short, to walk with the world instead of with God. Remember, Jesus Christ is not the Saviour of men *in* their sins, but *from* them.

(5) The shepherds told the message to others. If you have not found Jesus, kind reader, when you do, tell it to others. If you have found him, did you tell others the blessings and pleasures of the Christian life, and endeavor to persuade them to embrace it? How can you keep from telling the news? See New Testament examples of healing. When Jesus made “the lame to leap as a hart, and the dumb to sing,” the blind to see, and the leper to rejoice in consequence of being healed of the dread malady, their first impression was to herald the tidings to one and all. The shepherds told *all* they knew of the gospel revealed; do we do the same? Brother, what is Christ to you? Have you told others what a precious Saviour you have found? Are you willing to tell at home and abroad what Jesus has done for you, or assist some one in carrying the message to earth’s remotest bounds? If a man goes to a new

country, and does not say to his old neighbors "Come," we think he either has found no better country than the one he left, does not realize it, or feels no interest in others. The same is true in regard to the Saviour. Any one who claims Christ has been "formed in him the hope of glory," and does not labor to induce others to partake of the "Bread of Life," and drink from the healing stream, has certainly tasted very lightly, if tasted at all, of the "word of God, and the powers of the world to come." Any one who does not look beyond himself in Christianity can not see himself as he really is.

Christianity is a missionary religion. To be at all like Jesus, we must be missionaries in deed and in truth. Many boast much of their orthodoxy, stoutly claiming to walk in the footsteps of Christ, and never give one cent for Foreign Missions. Some one has suggested that the principal difference between Christianity and sectarianism is, the latter is man seeking after God, while the former is God seeking after man. That being true, those of us who claim God is not out of humor with the sinner, but is seeking him with the gospel, endeavoring to lead him back to pardon and peace, to be consistent, must be missionary in word, money and labor.

Christian, tell the story, directly or indirectly, to others. Sinner, come to Jesus, so you can tell others what a precious Saviour you have found. Come to the Saviour described in the Bible—not one of your own liking.

## SERMON III.

### THE BABE OF BETHLEHEM.

LUKE II. 8-20.

Christ had an existence before he was the child born, the Son given. Hear John say in the beginning of his Gospel, where he is displaying the inner life and divine power of Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John i. 1-3). From this we learn that Christ was with the Father in the morning of time, when the worlds were spoken into existence.

When Christ Jesus the Lord was offering his intercessory prayer to the Father, he said: "Father, glorify thou me with the glory that I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). In this Scripture Christ dates his existence previous to the beginning of time—prior to the time the great Jehovah spoke in the Garden of Eden, and organized a family with language and religion. Upon another occasion, when Jesus was speaking to the Jews, he said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58). Though Abraham had long since been sleeping the sleep which knows no timely waking, yet Christ monopolizes time, and dates his existence before the days of

Abraham. From these passages we readily conclude that the pre-existence of the Saviour is substantiated by the Bible. The virgin Mary was his mother. His father was God, through the Holy Spirit. Joseph was the reputed father. Both Joseph and Mary were the descendants of David. The genealogy in Matthew is likely that of Joseph; that in Luke probably that of Mary. Hence, Jesus was both legally and really the son of David.

Bethlehem was an appropriate *place* for the Saviour's birth. It is true, Mary's home was in Nazareth; but Jesus, being the son of David, should be born in the "city of David." He was born in humble circumstances, probably that his victories might be seen to be by divine, not human, power. Had his birth occurred in the palace of the rich, and had he received attention from the crowned heads of the world, his achievements might have been attributed to his surroundings. But his poor environments challenged any thought of that kind. As it was, it was divinity rocked in the cradle of weak humanity—"low lay his head with beasts of the stall."

The *time* of Christ's birth was fitting. It was once a profound problem to the writer why it was so long after the transgression in Eden until the coming of the Son of man. But now he thinks he sees divine philosophy underlying the matter. Certain problems had to be solved before the "fulness of time," and Paul teaches us that Jesus came then. I do not see how it was expedient for God

to save man until he was convinced he could not save himself. He was not convinced of his own inability until he had exhausted his own resources. To do that required no little time. The exceeding sinfulness of sin had to be made manifest, a new nomenclature had to be made, etc., before the proper time arrived for the advent of the "Man of sorrows." Though there were many lands, almost the whole world was at this time under Roman rule; and hence the preachers would be protected in their work. The scepter of the Cæsars was almost universal, and the Roman eagles were dancing in the sunlight of every nation. It seems that the Jews had learned all they would about God; and yet Jesus came before the destruction of their nation, capital and temple.

Christ came at a time of universal peace. The temple of Janus was closed for the second time in Roman history. Hence the gospel could have free course, and be glorified. There were no special clouds of war in the nation's sky, and the sun of peace was riding high in the political heavens, saluting the Babe of Bethlehem, the "Prince of peace." The Jews had been dispersed into almost every land, and had built synagogues—places in which the gospel could be preached. So it seems the time had rolled around for nobler deeds. The long silence of four hundred years had been broken by the "Voice" in the wilderness; and the time had come for the Son of man to enter upon the stage of action and commence the work of rolling back the tide of

woe, which was threatening to burst upon the immortal soul.

I. The Saviour's birth was announced in Luke ii. 8-14.

(1) The story was first told by the angel (8-12). The angel, with his pinions dipped in the fountain of eternal light and love, sped to earth with the message of a "Saviour born in the city of David, which is Christ the Lord."

(a) The message came first to the poor. A gospel for the poor is a gospel for all men. One thing especially peculiar in Christ's career was the interest he manifested in behalf of the poor. When John's disciples inquired of the Lord as to his mission, he said: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see. The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them" (Matt. xi. 4, 5). Christ gave, as an evidence of his being the promised one, the fact that the poor have an opportunity of hearing and obeying the gospel. In perfect harmony with this, the testimony upon another occasion was, "The common people heard him gladly."

Christ Jesus did not neglect the poor; neither should those who claim to be his followers ever do so. Remember, those who give to the really poor, lend to the Lord. Many who call themselves Christians are not very mindful of the poor and unfortunate. Frequently church-houses are not as inviting to the poor as they should be. The houses are



so elegant, the pews so fine, the rent for them so high, the renters dress so extravagantly, that the poor do not feel they are wanted, neither do they feel at home in places of so much cost and style. While there is frequently some ground for this, when did you ever know any one kept from the theater, ballroom or show because his coat was not the latest cut, and "his hat quite common, too"? Strange, indeed, such excuses will be rendered for not attending church, but not for failing to attend places of worldly amusements.

(b) The message came while the shepherds were engaged in their daily duties—keeping their flocks. The best place to be is at the post of duty. We may expect God there. Brother, where is your post of duty? Is it in the pulpit, proclaiming Christ and him crucified to a dying world? If so, are you "pure from the blood of all men," shunning not "to declare all the counsel of God"? Is it among the brethren, teaching them their duty, and encouraging them to remain faithful in the divine life? If so, do you instruct them along *all* the lines of Christian activity, and warn them as to results if they neglect duty? Or, is your mission in the room of the sick and dying, ministering to their varied necessities, and pointing their languishing eyes to the great Healer of soul and body? If so, are you found there?

Is your God-given work in the foreign field, enduring the hardships thereof, and pouring into the benighted

heathen's ear the story of a Saviour's love? If so, are you there? Does your duty lie in walking out and in before the congregation in the capacity of a bishop, "taking heed to yourself, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"? If so, are you there? Or, is it your duty to stand as a "private" in the great army of the Lord, holding aloft the banner of salvation, engaging in missionary endeavor, and all the work along the different lines of Christian labor? If so, are you there, letting your light so shine before men that others may be constrained to bow to the mandates of heaven's King? Whatever you find to do, do it with all your might. Be up and doing "while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work."

(c) The greatest gifts of God sometimes come in the humblest forms. All the blessings which have ever come to the human race from the fields of English literature have been expressed in the twenty-six letters of the alphabet. So every blessing of pardon which has rejoiced the newborn soul in Christ; every promise which has cheered the weary pilgrim on his journey home; every hope which has painted a halo of glory around the tomb, and every assurance which has made bright and lovely the city of our God, have come through the Babe of Bethlehem.

Concerning this adorable One, it may be truthfully said, his equal has never been, his superior will never be. He satisfies every need of the human soul.

If in this dreary, dark world man needs light, the Bible says: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Jesus exclaims: "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

If, scarred and worn by sin, to be a new creature is the desire of the soul, Paul reminds us: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." If in this world of struggle and strife man longs for peace, the Babe of the manger is the Prince of Peace, his birth was heralded with a song of peace, his life was a life of peace, his message to the weary is one of peace, his sleep of death was the sleep of peace; his journey to the skies, his coronation, his reign "over heaven and earth most glorious," is in the interest of deathless peace. If the desire is freedom from condemnation, Paul assures us: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If the soul is longing for redemption, the teaching of the Bible is that justification is secured "freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. . . . In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Is the cry of the needy soul for fullness or completeness? "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. . . . In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. . . . Ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

Well might Paul say: "For all the promises of God in him, are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." In fact, there is no real need of the human soul that does not find ample provision in the peerless Babe of Mary. Knowing this, Paul asserts: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. . . . That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

(*d*) Christ came to *all*—to *me*—he is *my* Saviour. Unworthy though I be, he is anxious to be my Saviour. Thank the Lord for the unspeakable gift.

(2) The story of the Saviour's birth was also made known by the heavenly messengers (ii. 13, 14). Not only was his birth announced by the angel, but the heavenly host made the universe vocal with praise, saying: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The birth of Christ was too sacred and of too much importance for *men* to tell. An angel from heaven first announced it upon the shores of time; and then the angelic choristers, surrounding the peerless Babe, took up the strain, and, mounting above the skies, filled the universe

with the story, singing the song of redemption, methinks, in the far-away home of the soul.

(a) The angels could find nothing more worthy of praise than God's love in the salvation of man. Neither can the imagination of man, or burning seraph's ken, discover anything more worthy of praise in all the universe. That God, who is perfect in wisdom, power, purity, and in everything that is good and great, would condescend to fill humanity with his presence, innocence and power in the person of Jesus Christ, that all who will may be led into the Father's blissful presence to reign with him for evermore, is enough to cause the whole universe to send forth anthems of praise. Well might Paul exclaim, as it is written: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

(b) The greatest good news on earth is: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The only hope of peace is in Jesus. Angels praise God for his blessings to others; often our praises to him for his blessings to us are so feeble. If the angels feel interested in the salvation of our race, we should feel more so.

(c) The angels' song consists of two strains: (1) "Glory to God in the highest;" (2) "and on earth peace, good will toward men." The first strain is, "Glory to

God in the highest " heaven, in the highest strain, and in the highest degree. The second strain is, " Peace on earth, good will toward men "—peace, first, between God and man; and hence between man and man. Soul's peace with itself—it is a blessed thing for the soul to be at peace with itself. The soul's peace with its own environments—it is a heaven-born privilege to live in an atmosphere of peace. Secondly, the soul at peace with the law of God—that soul is to be pitied that is not at peace with the law of God. By that law we should live, for by it we are to be judged.

II. The Babe was sought and found. (Luke ii. 15, 16.)

(1) The shepherds went at once to seek Jesus. They did not procrastinate, they did not wait for a more convenient season, but went immediately to Bethlehem, " and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."

(2) The shepherds went in *haste* to find the Saviour. They found him *where* God said, and *as he said*. Christ can always be found *where* he is revealed, and *as* he is made known. He does not reveal himself to the heart through the feelings and emotions. A knowledge of him does **not** come by means of any strange light which may have appeared during some protracted meeting, or the hour of secret prayer. Intelligence concerning the Saviour is **not** conveyed by a " still small voice," which says nothing. He is not found in any dream, but in the glorious gospel. The church, the gospel, and all things connected with Chris-

tianity, are filled with the fulness of Christ Jesus the Lord. He can always be found where God has revealed him; that is, in the Book of books, the Bible. All this is applicable to becoming a Christian. We must seek and find the Saviour by faith and obedience to the gospel. Should do so at once—do not delay the matter. “Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.”

III. The news concerning Bethlehem’s Babe was scattered abroad.

(1) The shepherds told it: “And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child” (ii. 17).

(2) All wondered at that which was told them: “And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds” (ii. 18). *Wonder* was the only effect, so far as we know. Frequently now when the gospel is preached in its ancient simplicity and purity, the hearers wonder, but refuse to embrace the truth. Wonder at the preacher’s knowledge of the Bible; wonder at the childlike simplicity of the message; wonder that more do not heed it; wonder, wonder, but wonder is all—that and nothing more. Wonder in health, in sickness, wonder in death; and then leave this world without the Saviour, and be carried to the wonderland, wondering why they are not saved.

(3) “But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart” (ii. 19). Ponder: “To weigh in the

mind; to consider and compare the circumstances or consequence of an event, or the importance of the reasons for or against a decision." Probably she pondered not only the things she then heard, but everything she knew concerning the child. It may be the many promises and prophecies with which she was familiar concerning the Christ; what Gabriel said to her on the occasion of the annunciation; the guiding star; the song of the heavenly host, which aroused the vigilant shepherds; the message of the shepherds; and the wonder of the people—were kept and pondered in her heart. Mary pondered the story, the shepherds told it—both are necessary.

(4) The shepherds returned praising God for his great blessings. "And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (ii. 20).

In conclusion, taking a summary of the main thread of the discourse: The birth of Christ announced, equals the gospel preached. Jesus sought and found, equals the gospel believed and obeyed. The news spread, equals the missionary phase of the cross.

Yes, tell the good tidings—tell the news here, tell it there, tell it everywhere. Tell it wherever there is an eye to see, an ear to hear, a soul to save. Tell it, tell it, tell it.



## SERMON IV.

### THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST.

LUKE I. 35; MATTHEW I. 23; JOHN I. 14.

The incarnation of Christ is one of the most stupendous facts of all history. It is something in which humanity should feel the deepest interest; for it is the event which bridged the chasm—created by sin—between God and man, giving our race the privilege of entering into divine companionship with our heavenly Father. In considering this wonderful theme, certain questions will naturally arise in the mind of the investigator.

I. Whence came Jesus the Christ? No one preceded him who was his equal, and his like has never been seen since his time. “He is the Source of all good, the Fountain of every excellence, the Mirror of perfection, the Light of heaven, the Wonder of earth, time’s Masterpiece and eternity’s Glory; the Sun of bliss, and the Way of Life”—whence did he come?

(1) Gabriel, on the occasion of the annunciation, said to Mary: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke i. 35).

(2) The angelic messenger that flew from God’s presence to herald the birth of this wonderful child said he was “Christ the Lord.”

(3) Jesus himself said: "For I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John vi. 38). He again said: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (xii. 49). When we remember he never thought, said or did anything wrong; was a stranger to prejudice and worldly ambition, and at no time had to hesitate for a moment in answering the most profound questions, we should readily concede his claims to divinity.

(4) Christ's sublime doctrine and miraculous works furthermore attest that he was "God with us"—would be "God in us," if we would "open the door." For it is written: "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me" (Rev. iii. 20).

II. Why did Christ come clothed in the garb of humility—why the incarnation?

(1) At first, man was made in the image of God. Hence God loved his lost and wayward children. He loved the race, furthermore, in consequence of man's character, and his relation to God. The banishment of man from God in consequence of sin was a more serious matter than can possibly be imagined by us, who live in the blaze of the developed gospel. It is true, man was first made in the image of God; but that image was marred by transgression. Man, before the introduction of sin, was a very different

being from man born since the transgression in Eden. Hence the Bible teaches that Adam was made in the image of God (Gen. v. 1), and that Seth was born in the image of Adam (verse 3); that is, after the transgression.

After the cup of life was poisoned by sin, it seems to have been two or three hundred years before man was hopeful enough of his fallen condition to call upon God in prayer. (Gen. iv. 26.) Then for centuries man's lips were sealed; and he approached God only through the medium of sacrifice. In the days of Enos men *talked* with God (Gen. iv. 26); then later Enoch *walked* with God; but, coming down to the time of the incarnation, we find that God was not only over all, above all, but in all the obedient through Christ. God loved his lost and wayward ones; and, in consequence of man's character, and his relation to the Father, Christ was sent in the form of humanity to touch and tender the race that it might be led back to glory and peace.

(2) Some one asks, "Could not this have been accomplished without the incarnation?" Suffice it to say, the incarnation was God's way; and hence it is best. Whatever God does is always best for all concerned.

(3) The incarnation was in consequence of man's ignorance, guilt and mortality. Man had no certain light as to the future. The question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" had not been fully answered. The immortality of the soul was an unsettled question. Socrates and Plato grappled with it, the ancient bards faintly touched it with

their lyres; but the answering had to await the coming of the Son of man, when it could be read in the halo which lingered around the open tomb, and in the blazing light of the gospel.

(4) Jesus of Nazareth came to show us the Father; for he said, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." For long ages it has been understood that no one could see God's face and live. Moses had seen different manifestations of God, but he requested to see his glory. Methinks God only partially granted that request when he placed Moses in the cleft of the rock, and hid his own face as he passed by the great leader of the children of Israel. Man's sins had so long kept him from God's presence, that Christ came to introduce again humanity to its Lord. Christ, then, is God manifest in the flesh—God personified—God localized.

(5) The incarnation places a higher estimate on man. It shows the sublime possibilities of human nature, the worth and dignity of the human soul.

(6) He came to preach good tidings to the poor. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19).

(7) The following are some of the reasons for Christ's coming to this world in humble circumstances:

(a) Because his kingdom was not of this world. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36). "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17). "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12).

(b) The great mass of men in all ages have lived in a humble condition; and, to be in closest touch with humanity, it was necessary for Christ to be poor. No other person who ever trod the shores of time was as poor as he. So poor, earth refused him a resting-place for his head while living; and he was buried upon borrowed ground.

(c) Being born in poverty and obscurity, he would teach us the dignity and sacredness of human nature itself, without the aid of riches and earthly power.

III. We will now consider the influence of the incarnation upon the life of man.

(1) Let us notice its influence upon childhood. It has had, now has, and always will have, no little influence over this period of human existence. I am very thankful Jesus

was once an infant, a youth, and a young man. That being true, he enters into sympathy with all the developments of the human race. So all ages and stages of humanity have a perfect example in the person of Jesus Christ.

(a) The young, even, can take him as a model in humility. His life from the cradle to the grave was a continued scene of humility. He never said or did anything to indicate haughtiness and pride.

(b) Jesus was industrious. He did not spend his time in idleness; neither do any who are good and useful in this life. Raise a child in indolence, and it takes no inspired prophet to correctly write upon its future, ruin and condemnation. Do you not usually inquire in vain in the halls of the past for an indolent, profligate youth who became useful, great and good in the riper years of his life? I think of no instance where those who spent the morning of their existence in idleness passed its evening in the good graces of the world, leading it to higher and better things.

(c) Jesus was obedient to his parents. It is taught that when Mary found her lost child in the temple, he followed his parents to Nazareth, and "was subject unto them." He is a pattern for the young in obedience to parents.

The Bible gives forth no uncertain sound concerning the attention parents should receive at the hands of their children, as shown in the following language: "Children,

obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise" (Eph. vi. 1, 2). Paul again says: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 20). Of course, the apostle would have us to understand to obey them in all things that are *right*. Show me a child that regularly disregards the wishes of his parents, and in a few years I can show you a man or woman who is a waif upon the sea of humanity, a blot upon society.

(2) Influence of the incarnation upon woman.

(a) Christ found woman in slavery. When that rib was extracted from Adam's side, and molded into incarnate beauty and loveliness, woman was placed by the side of man as his beatified companion. Her mission was to be man's helpmeet, to sweeten his cup of existence, to throw her broad mantle of love and winsome graces over his rugged nature, and encourage him while on his journey home. What a change did sin work. After the introduction of sin, instead of woman being man's companion, she became his slave; and was in this condition when Jesus came. Where Jesus is not now known, woman is still in slavery. Missionaries tell us that in traveling through the East they find this true. In leaving Jerusalem, the tourist meets husband and wife going to the city for the purpose of bartering. The husband is *riding* the beast, and the wife walking, carrying whatever they have to trade. Hence, heathendom means

slavery and drudgery for women. The more benighted the land, the worse the condition.

(*b*) The influence of Christ and Christianity is to break the shackles of slavery, raising woman again to the companionship of man, as she was in the days of primeval purity. It has been well said: "Woman was not taken from man's head that he should look up to her, nor from his feet that he should trample her in the dust; but from under his arm that he should protect her, and from near his heart that he should cherish and love her."

(3) Christ's influence over the home life. "Home, sweet home" is changed from a mere brothel to an earthly paradise under the transforming beams of the "Sun of righteousness."

(*a*) Christ's instruction to the twelve when he first sent them out was: "And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you" (Matt. x. 11-13). He advises his disciples how to act if the house be worthy, or if it be unworthy, thus emphasizing the sanctity of the home.

(*b*) While the Bible says nothing especially relative to the home life of our Saviour, I read enough between the lines to convince me it was beautiful. He seems to have had at least three homes during his earth life: Nazareth,



Capernaum, and at Bethany, with Mary, Martha and Lazarus. He gave emphasis to many things which are absolutely necessary to a model home. The following are some of the things in home life upon which he lays stress: (1) He recognizes the ties which should exist between husband and wife, stating, among other things, that the husband should forsake all else, and cling unto his wife; and that "what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (2) He sanctions family relationship, by acknowledging the feelings which should exist from parents to children, and from children to parents. (3) His love and gratitude for his mother were manifested in his dying hour, by committing her into the hands of John, the disciple he especially loved. (4) Everywhere Christ encouraged humility, purity and everything which has a tendency to make us better, and home life sweeter.

(c) Elevating woman is brightening home, for *there she* is queen. Home is her school-room, her kingdom; and love is her scepter.

(d) In imagination, contrast the heathen's dwelling-place with that home in a Christian land where Christ reigns over heart and hands. One is the abode of ignorance; the other, the home of intelligence. In one, darkness and superstition reign supreme; in the other, the light and love which are reflected from the life and teaching of Jesus rule evermore. In one, woman is a slave; in the other, a companion. In one, woman is an ignorant subject; in the other,

she is an intelligent queen, impressing herself upon the family affection, smiling as she wields her scepter of love over all within. In one, the children are not appreciated, but neglected, treated as offcasts; in the other, they are cherished, loved and protected, being trained for usefulness here, and happiness in the regions of immortality. The Christian's home is the nursery of the church and type of heaven.

(4) The benign influence of Christianity over the poor and helpless has long been felt. Christ's mission, as taught by himself, is to preach the gospel to the poor, bind up the broken hearts, liberate the captives, raise the fallen, strengthen the helpless, and lead every child of sin and sorrow, that is willing, to the fountain of living waters.

(5) Influence of the incarnation upon social customs. Christ's life and teachings have been felt in the social circle. Since the introduction of Christianity, there has been given a new sacredness to human life. Before the reign of grace, life was considered a matter of but little concern; but since then it has a new phase. By the Christian this life is worth living, and is worthy of all the attentions the improvements of the age can confer upon it. The bonds of matrimony are more holy now than before the incarnation. It is true that often the sacred precincts of the marriage relation are invaded, and the bonds snapped asunder by ruthless hands; but this is not done with the consent of Christianity, but in spite of it. The influence of Christianity is to strengthen the cords which are woven

into one at the hymeneal altar, and cement them with the undying principle of heavenly love.

(6) Let us next notice the influence of Christianity over government and law. These have received at least a share of the influence of that One who "spake as never man spake," and who acted as never man acted.

(a) It has wrought a wonderful revolution in regard to slavery. The watchword of Christianity is *Freedom*. It is placed in the great "lump of humanity"; and its effort is to break the shackles of slavery, liberate the captives, and introduce the reign of universal peace and brotherhood.

(b) Time and space forbid my speaking at length of the influence of the incarnation upon polygamy, divorce, social purity and the labor problem.

(c) Have time at present to only refer briefly to intemperance and war. The hydra-headed monster, Intemperance, is losing his hold upon human hearts and lives, being driven back by the penetrating beams of the sinless Son of man. While the monster's influence is yet great, while millions are annually spent to propagate his nefarious business, who can not see he is losing respectability? It takes no gifted prophet to realize the time is not far distant (unless there should be a backward revolution) when the man who drinks will not be respected. The saloonist is not generally respected *now*; and the time is not long until the whisky maker and drinker will keep him company. Let the good work go on. The writer longs to see the time when

the reign of the Prince of peace will have so much influence over the hearts of the people that proud and gifted America will no longer be considered a nation of drunkards.

Finally, let us briefly consider the influence of the Saviour's reign upon *war*. The first four thousand years of the Adamic race is a record of war and bloodshed. The pages of both profane and sacred history are baptized in human gore. But when the heavenly host rejoiced over the birth of the King of kings and Lord of lords, they exclaimed, "Peace on earth, good will toward men." Now the war king is not at all so frequently seen walking upon the bosom of the threatening clouds, shaking the lightning from his fingers, stepping forth with a torch in one hand and a sword in the other dripping with the blood of the innocent. Methinks the time of war is nearly past. Belligerent questions are now being settled by diplomacy and arbitration. In the distance we see the war-cloud clearing away, giving place to the rainbow of perpetual peace. Listen to the Psalmist: "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot with fire" (Ps. xlvi. 8, 9). This harmonizes so beautifully and perfectly with the prophecy of Isaiah: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up

sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. ii. 4).

For the following reasons we conclude the reign of universal peace must be near: (1) From the above and kindred passages. The very nature of redemption's scheme is opposed to war. Christ is the Prince of peace, the gospel is the law of peace; and every influence of Christianity is to subdue all the belligerent feelings in man, and bring the whole human race under the reign of universal peace. (2) The signs of the times indicate the day is near when no more war-clouds will arise; and when the lion and the lamb will lie down together, the lamb resting his head upon the shaggy main of the king of the forest. The Spanish-American war indicates that the world is rising above the principles of war and bloodshed. And then listen to the Czar of Russia, calling for the disarmament of the nations of the earth. All these things are no faint prophecies of a better and brighter day in the near future. Even so, come, we beg, in the name of the Lord Jesus.

## SERMON V.

### INFLUENCE OF THE INCARNATION UPON THE LIFE AND PROSPERITY OF THE NATIONS.

LUKE II. 13, 14; JOHN I. 1-14.

Having, in the last discourse, discussed the influence of the incarnation upon man, we are now desirous of considering its bearings upon the various nations of the earth.

I. The influence of the incarnation in promoting peace among the nations.

(1) Christ's teaching relative to peace is worthy of consideration.

(a) The evangel of the heavenly host, bowing over the Babe of Bethlehem, was, "On earth peace, good will toward men." Jesus is called the "Prince of peace." His mission upon earth is to reconcile man to God—to establish peace between God and the human race—between man and man. The influence of Christ is to destroy the sin and enmity of the heart, and induce man to lean confidently upon the bosom of his God.

(b) In that matchless Sermon on the Mount we find one of his sublime and heaven-born utterances to be: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Peacemakers are needed everywhere. In the family, in the neighborhood, in the Church, in the State and in the world. No one can be eminently success-

ful in peacemaking who is not at peace with God, and hence with man; no one who fails to have the gospel of peace reigning in his heart and life.

Once when the storm-king was walking upon the battlements of the lowering clouds, playing familiarly with the hoary locks of "Blue Galilee"; when the winds were roaring, the waves rising, the boat riding high upon the bosom of the crested billows, and the timid disciples were affrighted, the Messenger of good tidings arose from his slumbers, and, looking out over the waste of waters, said, "Peace, be still." The winds, folding their wings, retreated from the scene of darkness; the waves were rocked to sleep upon the bosom of the deep, and the sea became as calm as the shades of evening. So Christ and his teaching say to the warring, surging, boiling sea of humanity, Cease your strife, lay down your puny arms of rebellion, and, coming with the olive branch of peace, take refuge in the realms of the King of peace. Frequently when Jesus restored sight to the blind, gave hearing to the deaf, made the lame walk, or the dumb to speak, he would say: "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

(c) Before the reign of the Saviour, even the apostles were revengeful and belligerent. After Pentecost, the "sons of thunder" were bold, yet submissive. Think of John being changed from a man of warlike spirit into "the apostle of love" by intimate association with the Son of peace, and the transforming influence of the gospel of peace.

(*d*) We see the same conception of the mission of the Messiah in the preaching of the apostles. Listen—"But glory, honor and peace to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile" (Rom. ii. 10). "Let us, therefore, follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. xiv. 19). "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I. Cor. xiv. 33). "Be at peace among yourselves" (I. Thess. v. 13). "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. v. 22, 23). From these and kindred passages concerning the life and teaching of Christ, we come to the conclusion that Christianity is a system of peace, and its mission is to establish peace on the earth, and usher in the reign of perpetual tranquility, universal love and brotherhood.

Note: Christ belonged to no special country. To save the whole world, he must belong to the whole world. Jesus was really more than a Jew. His conception of God, his estimate of man, his ideas of man's relation to God, his teaching in regard to God's love for man, and the new stamp of value he placed upon the human soul, are too far-reaching in their sweep, and too broad in their scope, for any one country. Instead of Christ belonging to any one country, the whole world belongs to him—if all will believe and obey his teachings.



(2) Think of the hostile attitude of the ancient nations. They stood, as it were, with their armor on, their sword in one hand, stained with blood, a flaming torch in the other; just ready at a moment's warning to demolish each other, strewing death and devastation in their wake. Behold Julius Cæsar, weeping because he had not imbued his hands in innocent blood; then rushing forth like a furious beast of prey, destroying the happiness of three millions of people, by killing a million, leading a million into captivity, and dispersing a million over the globe. See Alexander the Great gathering his armies, bathing his martial robe in human gore, subjugating the whole world in not more than ten years; and when his wicked work was accomplished, having dipped his sword in the blood of dying humanity and written his name high upon the pinnacles of fame, see him weeping because there was not another world to conquer.

Before the coming of the sympathizing Friend, war seemed to be the special business of man. The very earth was reddened by the stained footsteps of hostile forces; the shrieks of the vanquished, the shouts of the victors, echoed and re-echoed down the line of the centuries, until they are now dying away in the soft, mellow light of peace, reflected from the life and teaching of the sinless Son of God. Prior to the cross, the brotherhood of man was practically unknown. "Might made right" was the teaching of the nations. The world had never advanced any further toward

correct thinking and acting than "love your friends, and hate your enemies."

II. The incarnation has had great influence as to benevolence.

(1) "Love your enemies" was a new doctrine when it fell from the precious lips of Jesus while delivering the Sermon on the Mount, which has ever been the admiration and astonishment of the nations. "The thought that comes to the front in the Sermon on the Mount is, the *government of human nature by internal, spiritual power*, so that men will no longer shelter themselves behind the strict letter of legal enactments or moral precepts, and drive as close a bargain as possible with the lawgiver, but, filled with the fulness of God, will delight to yield the richest possible fruitage of goodness, and abhor all fellowship with wrong. It locates happiness *within*, not *without*. The radiance which streams over all its utterances has its fountain in such beatitudes as these: 'Blessed the poor in spirit; blessed the meek; blessed the *pure in heart*; blessed the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness.'" ("Evenings with the Bible," Vol. iii., pp. 272-3.)

(2) "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 34, 35). Quite likely the respect in which the commandment was new was that the disciples' love for one another was to be meas-

ured by Christ's love for his followers. He gave his life for them, and they should do the same for each other, if need be.

(3) The spirit of Christianity has made the care of the widows and orphans a part of our religion. One of the Saviour's favorite homes was with Mary, Martha and Lazarus, whom we presume were orphans. When they were carrying the remains of the widow's son to the grave, Jesus, touching the bier, woke the dead, and returned him to his weeping mother. James says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the world." Where do we find the many orphan homes and asylums for the unfortunate? Are they in heathen lands, where they are bowing down to wood and stone? Do we find the benevolent institutions in countries of barbarism and darkness, where the blatant infidel raises his voice against God and the Bible? To ask these questions is to answer them. Any one who thinks and knows is forced to confess they find their home in lands lighted by the healing beams of the Sun of righteousness.

III. The influence of the incarnation upon labor and capital. The influence of Christ over labor and capital is well worthy our prayerful attention. Jesus had something important to say to all—rich and poor, high and low, young and old, male and female.

(1) Observe his teaching to the rich—those who trust in riches. “Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me” (Matt. xix. 21). Christ says again: “And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke xii. 13-21). This language is too simple to be made plainer by my feeble comments.

(2) Notice how perfectly Paul’s teaching upon the same subject coincides with the instruction of our dear Redeemer: “But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which

**drown men** in destruction and perdition. For the love of **money is the root of all evil**: which while some coveted after, **they have erred** from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. . . . Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (I. Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17-19).

(3) James testifies to the same effect, in the following language: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver are cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of your laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you" (Jas. v. 1-6). From the testimony of Jesus, Paul, James, and the entire New Testament, we see the one who trusts in riches is condemned

while he lives. Consecrated to the Lord, wealth is a **great** power for good in the world; otherwise, it is a deceit, and will cause us to fall "into many foolish and hurtful lusts." As long as we control the money, there is no special danger, but whenever money controls us, the danger is **great**. While the ship is in the water, all is well, usually; but when the water is in the ship, it and passengers are liable to go down together.

(4) What Christ teaches relative to labor is more by **example** than by words. He teaches that labor is honorable by laboring himself. He was not only a carpenter's son, but also a carpenter. His was a busy life—he spent it going about doing good. His advice to the publicans and soldiers was to be manly, faithful and content with their wages. (Luke iii. 13, 14.) I would suggest to the honest laborer, look **occasionally** at the problem of your relation to capital from the standpoint of your employer, so as to fully ventilate the question from every angle. "Be hopeful, not in haste to get rich. Remember, while poverty has its trials and temptations, wealth has greater." The Bible gives no warning against a life of honest toil, but does give many against a life of wealth, luxury and ease.

(5) Harmony between labor and capital. Listen to Christ teaching his disciples to beware of their **ambition**: "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." (Matt. xxiii. 8.) By so doing, he shows them there should be no feeling of enmity between those who minister

and those ministered to—that there should be harmony between capital and labor. “As a true friend to both rich and poor, I would suggest that neither has been blameless. Labor has not always been patient, nor capital sympathetic. Each has thought more of its rights than of its duties. In settling the problem, neither has been governed by the principles of the Golden Rule.” In the light of this rule, the capital-and-labor problem, the race problem, the expansion problem, and all kindred questions, can be settled.

IV. The influences of the incarnation in promoting universal brotherhood through evangelization. Let us now notice the influence of Jesus in this respect. Christianity is a great civilizer. In entering a new country it goes hand in hand with the woodman’s ax, the carpenter’s saw and plane, the professor with his books of human learning; and with all civilizing influences, which convert the wilderness into a land of fruits and flowers, and all the varied products—into a land where machinery hums, railroads belt the country, and where ignorance and superstition are driven back by the advancing sun of literature and science.

For near two thousand years there has been before the New Testament church the command of the Saviour to carry the gospel to the whole creation, promising pardon to the baptized penitent believer. Let us consider seriously, brethren, how well we are carrying out the walking orders of our conquering Commander.

Many members have never gone “into all the world,” neither have they ever encouraged any one else in going.

Think you the Lord will hold that member guiltless who makes no effort to obey that command he gave only a short time before stepping upon the bosom of the cloud that carried him on his homeward journey? The command is imperative, the Macedonian cry is being heard, and the world is very much in need of the pure gospel.

Brother, will you go to the world with the message of peace, or will you help send some one? What will your answer be? You cannot be guiltless and do neither, can you? The question will confront you in the great hereafter.

God has made those who are simply Christians custodians of the true faith, and the world naturally has a right to look to us for the truth as it is in Jesus. If we are not true to the trust, may not God raise a people who will properly regard every command of the great commission?

Some may conclude that "all the world" embraces too much--that such a call would include so many offcasts, profligates, etc., that society would be seriously injured thereby. They may decide, like Celsus, that Jesus "rejected all the good and collected all the bad." We would reply, like Origen: "It is true, our Jesus came to call sinners, *but to repentance*. He assembles the wicked, but to convert them into new men. We come to him covetous, and he makes us liberal; lascivious, and he makes us chaste; violent, and he makes us meek." The mission of Christ was to elevate man and transform him into the divine likeness.

The spirit of Christ is to do the will of his Father. Christianity is a missionary religion, since each new convert **must have the spirit of Christ**, which impels him to desire



the salvation of every other soul. Christianity is no respecter of persons. The doctrine of a common Father creates ties of brotherhood. Christ's kingdom is not bound by mountains, nor hedged in by seas. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts xvii. 26, 27).

Not only should the kinship of men be universal, but our love should only be bound by the limits of the human race. The divine love has been expanding more and more since the creation of man. We usually say the Bible reveals three dispensations of God's providence: The Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian. God's love seems first to have embraced a family, then the Jewish nation, and last the command was: "Go into *all* the world, and preach the gospel to *every* creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 15, 16).

V. Christ's influence in reconciling differences between God's children and promoting unity. Christianity is a marvelous force in this great work of reconciliation. The personality of Christ is a magnet. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32). When the world is united it will not be upon

any formulated set of doctrines, but in Christ. All social, political, moral and religious questions vexing the world's best thinking to-day can be settled only at the cross. Jesus is the great problem-solver of the ages. Let us all believe in him, live in him, until his spirit shapes our conduct after his life, and we will come closer and closer together, blending into one glorious brotherhood. The doctrine of Christ destroys the wall between the Jews and Gentiles, making one new man or church. Why not the same teaching finally dissolve the sectarian walls existing between God's children, fill them with the spirit of Christ—which is the spirit of unity—and lead them back into one fold and to one Shepherd?

Sometimes in chemistry two substances will unite only in the presence of a third. Christ is the solvent of humanity. The gospel has a unifying tendency. It emanates from, and reveals, the *one* living and true God. It has only one idea in its creed, and that is the Christ idea. It presents the one Son of man as the object of faith. Love is the one underlying principle of the gospel. "It invites to a destiny becoming children of a common Father," which has a tendency to unite men.

Indications of a universal unity in the near future, considered:

(a) Division is no longer defended. It has been only a short time since preachers taught division, thanked God for divisions, that "each individual might enter the church

of his choice ”; but that time has mainly passed. Now the divided condition of Christendom is generally regarded as quite a calamity.

(*b*) Christ is moving to-day upon the hearts of the young in a special manner. They are certainly studying the Scriptures in this age as never before. The army of consecrated young people is one of the forces upon which we confidently rely to break down the sectarian barriers, demolish human creeds, and exalt Christ in the hearts and lives of future generations. For some time it has been said, if we ever became a sober nation, it will be by deeply implanting in the minds of the young the principles of sobriety and temperance. So, methinks, if we ever have a united church, it will come largely through the influence of the young people.

(*c*) The union sentiment, voiced in great and enthusiastic meetings, is a favorable indication. In all parts of the country, in public assemblies, telling speeches are made, favoring a united church; prayers are being offered for the unity of God’s people; plans are being laid, and suggestions offered, looking, as they think, to the gathering of God’s divided and scattered children under one “vine and fig tree.”

(*d*) The exaltation of the Bible is another indication that a better day is near. It is presumed there has never been a time in the history of Protestantism when friends of truth were so united in insisting that the Bible is the

guide for man. It is certainly read more earnestly, prayerfully, constantly, impartially and connectedly by more people than ever before. To my mind, there is no doubt that human creeds are losing their prestige; and the friends of the Bible are increasing, its foes diminishing, day by day. The very fact that Christendom is studying the Bible as never before—at home and abroad—in the International Sunday-school Series, through the leading religious periodicals, in the pulpits and pews of the land, is no faint prediction of the tendency toward a united church.

(e) Missionaries in the foreign field are more clearly seeing, year by year, the necessity of God's people being one. So many of the heathen are like the chief who said to the earnest missionary trying to influence him to obey the gospel: "Go back home and agree among yourselves, and then I will consider the matter." Oh that Christians were agreed among themselves! If such were the case, certainly the time would not be far distant when the banner of salvation would wave from the rivers to the ends of the earth; and every responsible being would have an opportunity of believing and obeying the truth. It will have a tendency to unite the people of God for them to labor in the same field to exalt Christ in the heart of the heathen. "General Nelson had two brave lieutenants, who were enemies. He put their hands together in one of his, and, while pointing to the enemy with the other, said, 'Yonder is the foe; you must be friends.'" Pilate and Herod were enemies; but they united against Christ.

## SERMON VI.

### THE BOYHOOD OF JESUS.

LUKE II. 40-52.

Very little is recorded of the early life of Christ. We know but little of his infancy, not enough to know how rapidly he developed, etc.; but I feel satisfied he unfolded beautifully and symmetrically, for he was a manifestation of humanity at its best. Christ was human nature at high tide. A few very significant hints indicate the trend of things.

Early life usually tells on later life. Prudent youth and early manhood usually bespeak a sweet, happy and ripe old age. Many men comparatively young are now broken down, and prematurely gray, in consequence of imprudent living in young manhood. So full of meaning is the following expression of Luke: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him." In this brief announcement methinks three things are suggested. The physical, mental and spiritual development of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

Generally speaking, there are three things necessary to growth: life, food and exercise. In his physical growth he had the life, the food was furnished, and I imagine the exercise was abundant, he being the son of a carpenter. In

his intellectual culture, he had the mental vigor himself, his environments supplied the food, and his great mind was busy applying and drawing forth the lessons with which later he silenced his enemies, encouraged his disciples and astonished the natives. Luke would give us an idea of his spiritual development by saying: "And the grace of God was upon him." In favor with God—what a blessed thing to have the smile of our heavenly Father resting upon us while journeying to the tomb. If it be a blessing to live in favor with camps, courts and kings, it is certainly a much greater privilege to enjoy the approval of the "Great I Am."

It is generally said we are creatures of circumstances. With men that is largely true, but with the Son of man it is quite different. Christ's life was an exception. He was what he was in spite of his surroundings. Being the God-man, he bade defiance to his environments. He would have been what he was regardless of surroundings. Christ's social environments may suggest to us what is most favorable for symmetrical development. It seems his associates were poor. His home—Nazareth—was a humble town, and in a poor, mountainous country. He was of humble parentage, which is often a blessing to children. The great of earth have usually been rocked in a rugged cradle, in a log cabin, surrounded by the aerial songsters and busy scenes of nature. Jesus was not only poor, but seems to have been reared away from schools, books, etc. (John vii. 15.)

Doubtless from the first, the mother of Jesus expected great things of him, for the following reasons:

(1) His miraculous birth indicated it. Nothing like it had ever been known in the history of the world. It is true many strange things had occurred, but the incarnation was the wonder of all wonders. Divinity stooping to fill humanity, that humanity might be lifted into divinity, was a stupendous fact.

(2) The vision of the shepherds was no common occurrence. While watching their flocks upon the nearer hills, to see the heavens radiant with light, and hear the angelic music of the spheres, was enough to convince any one that "love and truth had met together, righteousness and peace had kissed each other."

(3) The visit of the magi indicated that something unusual had occurred to call Eastern culture hundreds of miles to the stable to pay honor to the Manger King. In imagination I see the wise men of the East leaving their homes, wending their way to Bethlehem—guided by the friendly star—laying their trophies at the Saviour's feet, and in their hearts crowning him Lord of all.

(4) The words of Simeon and Anna have more than ordinary significance: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother mar-

veled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem ” (Luke ii. 29-38).

Doubtless Jesus was a perfect boy. The character of good boys is delineated in the following language: “And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel ” (Luke i. 80). “Children in whom was no blemish, but well favored, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king’s palace, and whom they might teach the learning and the tongue of the Chaldeans ” (Dan. i. 4). “And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground ” (I. Sam. iii. 19). “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures,



which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II. Tim. iii. 15). Sum up all the Bible teaches relative to the goodness of the boys Samuel, Daniel, John the Baptist and Timothy, and it does not make half that can be truthfully expressed in regard to the boy Jesus. Christ Jesus was just what a boy should be in every respect. He was energetic, dutiful to his parents, and kind to all. I am satisfied he never intentionally gave his parents one moment's trouble. There was no time of "wild oats" sowing with him. He formed no habits in youth that injured him in body, mind or spirit in after life. Reader, can you say as much? Sinful youth, learn lessons of practical utility from the life Jesus led.

A great event in the early life of Christ is expressed in the following language: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it" (Luke ii. 41-43).

Christ's parents were devoted. They went every year to Jerusalem to worship. They walked, I presume, at least seventy or eighty miles every year to attend the passover feast. They neglected not the commemorative institution, which forcibly brought to their minds the deliverance of their forefathers from Egyptian bondage. Not only did

they go, but when Jesus reached the age of twelve they took him with them. They may have taken him before, but I believe it is usually presumed this was his first visit to the great metropolis since he was an infant in Simeon's arms. Parents should take their children with them to worship—not *send* them, but go with them. The way parents sometimes absent themselves from the Lord's house, and permit the audiences to be composed mostly of children and young people, it might be more appropriate to change one passage of Scripture to read: "Children, bring up your parents in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Three times annually the Israelites assembled in the city of Jerusalem—at the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Such general meetings were of no little advantage to the Jews. They kept them somewhat in touch with each other. There is very much religious power generated in such great and enthusiastic meetings. They united the scattered people, and added greatly to social progress. They probably enabled the Jews to discuss various affairs, etc., etc. At the age of twelve years Jesus went with his parents to the passover. Being at this age what is called a **son** of the law, he was ready to learn a trade, preparatory to future usefulness.

Another thing which favorably impresses us with this wonderful child is that it seems he was deeply interested in the study of God's word. Though much time has been spent in endeavoring to ascertain what is the best method

to employ in imparting a knowledge of the Scriptures, it is doubtful whether a better plan has ever been used in the study of the Bible than the old way of asking and answering questions. Much time is spent memorizing what *men* say about the Bible instead of learning the Bible itself. Men's explanations of the Scriptures frequently need to be explained; but the Bible is its own best interpreter. Whenever it will, let Scripture interpret Scripture, is the safe way.

Many lessons of practical utility may be gathered by reading and studying the following language: "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake

unto them" (Luke ii. 43-50). Let us now consider some of the lessons of practical advantage:

1. We should all study God's word; we should do this regularly and daily. It is marvelous that so few people are daily students of the Bible. Reader, how many do you know who never permit a day to pass without prayerfully and critically studying the Scriptures some? I know very, very few. Let us consider some excuses rendered for not reading the Bible:

(1) "God's word, being a dead letter, being mere ink and paper, and hence powerless, I feel no special interest in its perusal." No power in God's word? Is there no power in man's word? Frequently there is more power in his word than in his arm. Tell me there is no power in the word of that general who can marshal a hundred thousand men or more, and move them just as he desires by the word of command? Behold the marvelous power of that silver-tongued orator, who can hold audiences spellbound for hours with his eloquence; who can convulse them with laughter, and melt them to tears at his will. If man's word has such influence, certainly there is great power in the word of God, "who plants his footsteps on the sea, and rides upon the storm." That there is power in the word of God, see Jas. i. 18; I. Cor. iv. 15; Ps. cxix. 50, 93; John vi. 63; Ps. xix. 7; Matt. xiii. 15; Ps. cxix. 105; Luke xvi. 19-31; I. Pet. i. 22, 23; John xvii. 17-19; Ps. xix. 8; cxix.

111; Jer. xv. 16; John xv. 11; I. John i. 4; I. Pet. i. 6-8.

(2) "I can not understand the Bible." If this be true, we are forced to one of two conclusions: Either God *would* not make the Bible plain enough, or he *could* not. Will any one say he *would* not—that he did not desire man to understand his word? Certainly no one is willing to call in question his benevolence to that extent. Then, if God would make the Bible simple, and has not, it necessarily follows that he *could* not. This conclusion very seriously calls in question his power. This places him below *man* so far as imparting intelligence is concerned. To say God *could* not address himself to man's understanding, makes him inferior to man, for man can write so he can be understood. Then we would conclude God would make his word plain enough for man to understand it, that he has made it thus plain; and man is culpable if he does not understand his duty to God and his fellowman.

(3) "I can not become interested in the study of the Scriptures." I look with astonishment at any one who says this. If you can not become interested in Biblical research, in what can you become interested? Do you say you are fond of history? The Bible contains the oldest history on record. Herodotus, the father of profane history, does not reach nearer the fountain-head of the stream of time than the close of the Pentateuch. Were it not for the first five books of the Bible, darkness, midnight darkness, would hang

over the course of human events for more than twenty-five hundred years. If poetry be your preference, the Bible contains some of the most beautiful poetical expressions which ever quivered upon the lips of men or angels. Are you more interested in law than in any other of the learned professions? If so, the Bible is the foundation of law. Is it literature or science in which you delight? If this be true, the Book of books, the Bible, contains some of the finest literature found in the human tongue; and is in harmony with all the sciences.

The very name indicates it is a superior book—Bible, *the book*, or the Book of books, or the book which is superior to any other. The Bible outstrips any authentic history not taken from it, for more than twenty-five centuries. Like a beautiful rainbow of promise, it arches the entire stream of time, resting upon eternity past and eternity future, and sheds a halo of glory upon each. It is the book of time and the book of eternity; the book of the past, present and future. The Bible is the book of the cradle and the book of the grave; the book of salvation and the book of condemnation; the book of man and the book of God. “The word of God has passed through every ordeal—through the burning furnace of severest scrutiny it has passed; and has come out of that furnace not only untarnished and unalloyed, but shining with a beauty, a glory, a luster, that surpasses all human intelligence. The arm of flesh could sooner quell the waves of the ocean, arrest

the winds of heaven, or pluck the sun from the center of his system, than add to this book any of the characteristics of weakness or folly, fraud or fiction."

Well might the immortal Pollock say: "Most wonderful book, bright candle of the Lord, star of eternity; the only star by which the barque of man could navigate the sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss securely; the only star which rose on time, and on its dark and turbulent billows—still, as generation drifting by succeeded generation, threw a ray of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God, the immortal hills, pointed the sinner's eye." (Quoted from memory.)

In harmony with this, another poet exclaims:

Blessed Bible, how I love it.  
 How it doth my bosom cheer.  
 What hath earth like this to covet?  
 Oh, what stores of wealth are here!  
 Man was lost, and doomed to sorrow,  
 Not one ray of light or bliss  
 Could he from earth's treasures borrow,  
 Till his way was cheered by this.

Yes, I'll to my bosom press thee;  
 Precious Word, I'll hide thee here.  
 Sure my very heart will bless thee,  
 For thou ever sayst good cheer.  
 Speak, my heart, and tell thy ponderings,  
 Tell how far thy roving led,  
 When this book brought back thy wanderings,  
 Speaking life as from the dead.

Yes, sweet Bible, I will hide thee,  
 Hide thee richly in this heart;  
 Thou, through all my life, shalt guide me,  
 And in death we will not part.  
 Part in death? no, never, never.  
 Through death's vale I'll lean on thee;  
 Then, in worlds above forever.  
 Sweeter still thy truths shall be.

(4) "I have not time to study the Bible." **More** mature thought will convince any one this is a mistake. There are twenty-four hours in a day. Divide it. Take eight hours for sleep—and this is more than is usually needed. Ten hours for labor—and there are very few, comparatively, who work ten hours per day regularly. Now we have six hours remaining. Give two hours for eating and recreation, and then there are four hours left to be disposed of some way. How will you spend them? You can do no better, certainly, than to give one of them, at least, to the prayerful investigation of the Scriptures. Is it not a modest demand to ask that one twenty-fourth of our time be given to the study of the Bible? To do this, it is difficult to conceive how much information can be gathered in twelve months.

2. Parents should know where their children are. Parents frequently take but little control of their children—just permit them to do any way, form any kind of associates, and go anywhere, at any time. Farmers usually know where their horses are, stock men where their hogs and cattle are; but many so-called Christian parents know not the whereabouts of their children from morning until night, and frequently late at night. None but those who have passed through similar experience can imagine the parental heart-throbs when they found not the child Jesus.

3. Children should never go anywhere they would be ashamed for their parents to find them. Dear reader, is



that the controlling influence of your life? Have you never been where you would have been ashamed for your parents to find you? Do not say "No" too quickly. When that young man visits the common theater, the ballroom, the grog-shop, the gambling-hall, or the house of ill-fame, would not his face burn with shame if his parents should find him there? Young people, make this the guide of your life: Never go anywhere you would be ashamed for your parents or God to find you.

4. Where any one freely and naturally resorts is an index to his character. You need not tell me the individual who frequents places of wickedness is pure and spotless. Jesus seemed surprised at his mother's search, and gently reminded her she might have known he would be found in his Father's house. Reader, if you should get lost, would your parents go to the house of worship to find you? To find some, the theater, the saloon, the gambling-den, the brothel would be searched. Where would they search for you?

5. It is well for young and old to study the Bible together. They can assist each other. We need both in meetings for Biblical research—the young to give life and good cheer, the aged to give counsel and to expound the weightier matters of law and gospel. It takes experience and the ripening life of old age to live in close touch with the Saviour, and to drink in his free spirit, which is breathed through the pages of revelation.

6. Find Father's business in Father's house. Our first duty is to ascertain what our Father's business for us is. Is it to preach the gospel? Is it to teach a class in Sunday-school? wait on the Lord's table? or contribute as the Lord has prospered us? There are things all should do in the Father's house: (a) One is to be *there*—the Lord favoring—*to fill space*; (b) contribute according to our ability; (c) eat of the Lord's Supper; and do anything in our power to make the meetings interesting and profitable. It is not always the Father's business that is transacted in the Father's house. Sometimes it is flirting, whispering, talking, wrangling or raffing that is carried on there. The house of worship was desecrated even in the days of the Saviour, as we learn from the following: "And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Matt. xxi. 12, 13).

Kind friend, have you ever desecrated the Lord's house? A lack of reverence in places of Christian worship is one of the growing evils of the present age.

7. It is beautiful to see children following their parents to worship; and parents should see that they do so. If all parents were Christians, and would then do their duty toward their children, not many children would be lost. God

has given them to us, and by a life of prayer, devotion and teaching we should gently lead them to our Father's blissful presence. Luke (ii. 51, 52) gives us a partial view of Christ's home life at Nazareth. We fain would linger around this humble town, if perchance we might catch, even by absorption, some lessons from this wonderful being as he walked out and in before the people.

While the Bible says but little relative to the home life of Christ, a hint here and a thought there are given—enough to convince us certain things were characteristic of him during the morning of his earthly existence.

(1) Christ was industrious. I can not imagine his being an idler. His whole life seems to have been a busy one. So much he desired to do in so short a time. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work." He spent his short life thinking, speaking and acting in behalf of humanity. We should do the same. We have no time for idle repining. Life is short, death is certain, the work is very much needed, and eternity is near us.

(2) He was obedient to his parents. Many children are not thus. I sometimes think this might be denominated the age of disobedience to parents. Frequently now, instead of parents controlling their children, the children control the parents. Parents are largely responsible for it. As a rule, children can be governed if you begin in time, and

begin *right*—in fact, if they are properly treated, obedience will be their desire and second nature.

(3) Jesus did not permit obedience to parents to conflict with his duty to God—we never should. The Saviour said: “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” We should suffer nothing to come in between us and obedience to our heavenly Father. “We ought to obey God rather than man.” Let God have the first place in our hearts. Remember, if we do not let him occupy the *first* place in our hearts, he will have none.

(4) Christ Jesus selected a calling, and honored it—so should we. Labor is honorable. Life is too short for us to become proficient in many things. Select a vocation, prepare well for it, and spend your life in its interest.

(5) “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature.” From this we learn that he developed physically and intellectually. How beautifully and symmetrically that precious life must have unfolded. Like the rose, that life must have opened more and more, sending its fragrance down the stream of time to the ocean, where it is taken up and carried to the golden shore, its influence to be felt evermore.

(6) Christ the Lord grew in favor with God and man. How could it be otherwise with such a life? “Jesus passed through all the stages of life, from infancy to manhood, and

represented each in its ideal form, that he might redeem them all, sanctify them all, and be a perpetual model for imitation. He was the model infant, boy, youth and man."

—*Philip Schaff.*

## SERMON VII.

### THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

MATTHEW III. 13-17 ; MARK I. 9-11 ; LUKE III. 21-23 ; JOHN I. 20-34.

Reader, peruse carefully these Scriptures, comparing passage with passage. These references are about all the Bible states relative to the Saviour's baptism. Eighteen years of Christ's brief earth-life are passed by in almost perfect silence by the sacred historians. Why this, has never been revealed to the human mind. No one knows why the Bible is so profoundly silent on many occasions when humanity would certainly have spoken. Doubtless in many places man would have found volumes where the Bible is silent as the grave. Suffice it to say it is true. Divine writers never spent a moment satisfying the idle curiosity of man. They seemed to have been burdened especially with one thought, and that was fulfilling and applying that virgin promise concerning the seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head.

For some time the clarion voice of the harbinger of the wilderness had been echoing and re-echoing along the banks of the Jordan, calling the Jewish nation back from its wandering; many had confessed their sins, and been baptized in that stream of sacred story, when lo, we behold the sinless son of Mary, at the age of thirty, wending his way from Nazareth to the Jordan where John was baptizing. The last carpenter's contract has been completed; his tools care-

fully laid away; his adieux to friends and loved ones said; and now, turning his face toward a frowning world, he voluntarily takes up the work of human redemption. Soon we see him standing by the side of John the Baptist, demanding baptism at his hands. Stupendous scene this! There stands the man of the desert, clothed in camel's hair; and the pure, spotless, humble carpenter of Nazareth, at whose birth the angels sang, the magi worshiped, the shepherds came, Mary pondered, and the earth rejoiced.

“But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?” John's idea seems to have been, I am baptizing people for the remission of sins (that is what the Bible says he baptized for)—“and comest thou to me?” The one the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose, who is to increase while I am to decrease—the Lamb of God—ask me to baptize him? It does seem to me it would be so much more appropriate for me to request baptism of him than for him to demand it at my hands. I need his baptism, but do not see why he needs mine. “And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.” Apparently, Jesus waives the question as to which is worthy to baptize the other; and simply replies, “Suffer it to be so now.” It is my duty and desire to “fulfil all righteousness.”

What is righteousness? David gives the clearest definition found in the Bible: “My tongue shall speak of thy

word; for all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. cxix. 172). Christ would ever live in the favor of God; and, as grace reigns through righteousness (Rom. v. 21), he desired to obey every commandment of the Father. "Hence, John, do not hesitate to comply with my request. It is a part of my Father's will. I desire to do it, for I am to be an expression of perfect obedience." If Christ, who was pure and sinless, could not fulfil all righteousness without being baptized, how can we poor, sinful creatures expect to do so? Lord, help us to be as willing to do thy will as Jesus was. May we consider nothing non-essential which thou hast commanded. Poor, weak man, who are you that would dare criticise God, by proposing to suggest what is essential and non-essential in the economy of grace?

"Then John suffered him." Witness Christ's baptism. In imagination I see the Baptist take Jesus by the hand: hand in hand they march down *into* the Jordan stream (for Mark teaches that after the baptism they came up *out of* the water). Of course, they could not have come up out of the water had they not gone down into it. Friendly reader, when you were baptized, did you *come up out of* the water? Did you *go to* the water, or was the water brought to you? Did you go to *much* water? Before baptism, did you go *into* the water, and after baptism *come up out of* it? Answer these questions honestly to yourself. Remember, if you desire to do as our blessed Saviour did in baptism, you



must go to the water, to much water, go down into the water, and come up out of the water. Occasionally a little preacher endeavors to prove how Christ was baptized, by a picture found in some Bible. The picture represents John the Baptist pouring water out of a horn or shell upon the head of the blessed Son of God. Any preacher ought to be ashamed to be guilty of such nonsense. A man who would endeavor to show by a picture how Christ was baptized has either a head or a heart that should not be envied. Who made the picture? Did God, John the Baptist, Christ, Paul, or any apostle or divine teacher? Certainly not; it was made by poor, narrow-minded, bigoted and prejudiced man.

Methinks I see John and Christ standing in the midst of Jordan. It is a beautiful day, near high noon. The shores are gently laved by the gliding tide. The ceremony is said, the waves open their bosom, and for a moment gladly embrace the precious form of the dear Redeemer; then, releasing their hold, let him arise and come "up out of the water." As he arises from the womb of the wave, I imagine I hear an expression of the Saviour's thanks and desires as they wend their way to the Father's presence on the wings of prayer. (Luke iii. 21.) Did you have a prayerful heart when you arose from the watery grave? Such an appropriate time for prayer! All past sins forgiven, heart made new, born from above, mists cleared away, enabling the new-born soul to read his "title clear to mansions in the skies"!

This must be an opportune time for the heart's best and sweetest affections to wend their way heavenward, on the wings of humble petitions.

While the divine man was dripping upon Jordan's banks, "the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him; and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Well pleased in him who was willing to fulfil all righteousness. Well pleased in him who, it seems, had never had a wicked thought, said an improper thing, or committed a sinful deed—who had the spirit of perfect obedience to the Father. So far as the Bible records, God never publicly confessed Christ as his Son in whom he was pleased until after his baptism. Under the gospel age God has never promised to acknowledge any one as his child until he or she arises, a penitent believer, from the Jordan of baptism.

Do you believe in Christ with your whole heart, and have you repented of every sin you have ever committed, and have you been baptized into the name of the sacred three? If so, you have the promise of pardon of your past sins; and God has recognized you as one of his adopted children; but if you have not, you can not appropriate to yourself that promise which cheers the soul, and enables it to take shelter in the bosom of the Father's covenanted love. Let us give ourselves the advantage of the doubt—go to the end of obedience where the promises are always found, as the Bible reveals. Baptism was the last act of Christ's pri-

vate, prayer the first act of his public, life. With us, baptism is the initiating step into the Church of Christ—enter the kingdom with prayer.

The question, “Why was Christ baptized?” has been frequently asked, and very differently answered. Let us now consider the reason or reasons for Christ’s baptism:

(1) Jesus was not baptized *in order* to the remission of sins, for he had no sins to be remitted. Being pure and sinless, baptism was not to him what it is to humanity.

(2) It was not *because* of forgiveness of sins. Whether baptism is in order to or because of remission, it presupposes sin. A certain Sunday-school teacher once asked a student, who was simply a Christian, if he believed Jesus was baptized in order to remission of sins. The student readily replied: “Do you think he was baptized because his sins had been remitted?” The student’s question was equally as relevant as the teacher’s, and had just the same bearing upon the design of baptism.

(3) It was not to conduct him into his priestly office. The lamented and erudite Isaac Errett says on this point: “It is urged by some that this was his consecration to the priestly office; and that as the Aaronic priests were washed and anointed at their consecration, so he was thus set apart as God’s great high priest. But there was no separate consecration of Jesus to the priesthood. He was consecrated to the Messiahship, which includes prophetic and kingly, as well as priestly functions. He did not belong

to the Aaronic order of priests, being of another tribe, and not subject, therefore, to their law; nor did the baptism in Jordan fulfil the Jewish law concerning the consecration of priests. It was as warrantable to seek for a type of his consecration among the consecrations of kings and prophets as in the consecrations of priests—for he was anointed to be Prophet, Priest and King, and the immediate work on which he entered after his consecration was that of a prophet, and not that of a priest. (Luke iv. 18-21.) He was anointed, not at the Jewish temple, but at the river Jordan; not by a Jewish priest, but by his Father in heaven; not with oil, but with the Holy Spirit; not merely as a priest, but as the Christ, the Son of God. We find, therefore, no explanation of his baptism in the Mosaic law of priestly consecration, which evidently had no fulfilment in this transaction” (Evenings with the New Testament, p. 89).

Furthermore, we infer from the teaching of the Hebrew Epistle that Christ was not a priest while among men. “For if he [Christ] were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law” (Heb. viii. 4). Jesus would not certainly be the high priest of the Christian profession until he was made perfect; and the Bible says he was “made perfect through suffering.” It does not appear that he could have fully sympathized with God’s wayward children, and interceded for them in their weakness, until he

was “tempted in all points like as we are”; and we know this was subsequent to his baptism. So the theology which teaches the design of the Saviour’s baptism to be to consecrate him to the priesthood is erroneous. Just like the rest of man’s teaching, it has no foundation in Bible thought.

The question is still before us with increased interest and importance—Why was Jesus baptized? Suppose we can not tell—one thing we know: it was done by divine direction, and hence was right. In answering this question, we have three sources of information on which we rely, which we will now arrange in the form of an ascending climax: (1) Reason; (2) John the Baptist, and (3) the Saviour.

(1) At least some of reason’s testimony is submitted in the following:

(a) “It is an essential item in his Father’s will. As such it could no more be omitted by him who said, ‘Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,’ than could the miracles he wrought and the sacrifice he made. By virtue of its being an important item of his Father’s will, and by virtue of his perfect knowledge of that will, it became an essential element of his obedience.

(b) “It was necessary to his self-commitment to the truth preached by John. It was the line of demarkation between those who rejected and those who accepted the counsel of God and the kingdom of heaven. He could not

stand with the Jews who rejected the counsel of God against themselves by refusing to be baptized. He must commit himself to the truth and the right. He did it by being baptized. As Moses passed through the cloud and the sea in which the Israelites were baptized unto him, so Christ submitted to the ordinance by which his disciples are baptized unto him.

(c) "It was the step that brought him to the reception of the Holy Spirit and the recognition of the Father. He said to John, 'Suffer it to be so now,' knowing that in the light of what would immediately follow he would be able to understand why he had demanded baptism. In the divine economy, the proper position of things is determined by their use. The design of Jesus' baptism determined its position. It was by no accident that it immediately preceded the panorama witnessed when he came up out of the water. It was in order to what followed, or, rather, to what was accomplished in it; viz.: full and complete self-commitment to the truth, to the kingdom, to his mission, and to his God" (W. H. Bagly, in the *Christian-Evangelist*).

(2) John the Baptist's testimony indicates that the Saviour's baptism was to manifest him publicly to Israel. "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water" (John i. 31). Apparently this was the divine way of publicly introducing Jesus to Israel, and the world he had

come to redeem. As much as to say, "Child of sin and sorrow," behold your King, your Lord, your Deliverer, who has come to raise you from your lost and ruined condition to a home in the skies, provided you will accept him, and be faithful until the storms of life are past. He is the full expression of the Father's love—the only hope of humanity.

(3) The Saviour's reason for being baptized is, "For thus it cometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. iii. 15). Had it ever occurred to you that to be baptized is a righteous act? To hear even some "divines" belittle baptism—making all kinds of slighty remarks in regard to it—we would reasonably conclude, if there be any truth in their statements, instead of baptism being a righteous act, it is anything else. If what some preachers say can be relied upon, to be baptized is a sin against common sense, decency and God; in fact, almost a sin against the Holy Spirit. Christ came to do his Father's will; and as baptism is a part of it, he desired to submit to that. Had we no other reason than this, it would be sufficient for every one who loves the Lord and believes his word.

It is remarkably strange that any one who claims to be true to God and the Bible, hearing Jesus say he was baptized to "fulfil all righteousness," would then, to support some false dogma, state he was baptized to conduct him into his priestly office. Many will surrender the plain word of God and Christ rather than some cherished human

opinion. I long for the time when human creeds, disciplines, dogmas, etc., will fade away, being eclipsed by the purer, sweeter, grander light of God's eternal truth.

Suppose there was only one source of information relative to the design of Christ's baptism, and that his own testimony, would not that be sufficient? Suppose Jesus were on earth, and some one should ask him why he was baptized, and he should respond, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," would you believe him? If so, why continue to say his baptism was to consecrate him to the priesthood, or something else for which there is no foundation in sacred thought? Jesus, coming to earth for the purpose of presenting to man the lesson of submission to the Father, taught obedience by both precept and example. He did not only command *us* to obey, but "*was himself* obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Lessons suggested by Christ's baptism:

(1) Jesus went some distance to be baptized—presume at least sixty miles. He did not seem to consider the question of convenience in the matter—the very argument many make for not being immersed, claiming that sprinkling or pouring is very much more convenient. That being true, is a strong argument in favor of immersion; for men do not usually leave an easy way of doing a thing, and take up a more difficult one at pleasure. Hence, had sprinkling or pouring, or both, been practiced in the apostolic age, there never would have been any one immersed.



Man ought to be utterly ashamed to bring up the question of convenience, or *looks*, when considering the thing of obedience to the Lord.

(2) Jesus went to the water instead of having the water carried to him.

(3) He went to *much* water—not to a glass or pitcher, but to the Jordan. It is said that once, when a certain preacher had some candidates to sprinkle or pour, “Raccoon John Smith” sought an opportunity, poured some of the water out of the pitcher, and drank the remainder. When the preacher observed there was no water, he whispered to some one near: “There is no water here.” Smith, arising, immediately said: “Pardon me for drinking your Jordan dry.”

(4) He went down *into* the water, for he came *up out* of it.

(5) Jesus was desirous of doing God’s will. If we are thus anxious, there will generally be made a way for the performance of every duty.

(6) After Christ’s baptism, God confessed him as his Son, in whom he was delighted. So when we arise from the watery grave to “walk in newness of life,” he sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father.”

(7) Immediately after Christ was baptized, he lifted his heart in prayer to his Father. We should enter the Christian life with a humble, prayerful spirit.

## SERMON VIII.

### THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW IV. 1-11; MARK I. 12, 13; LUKE IV. 1-13.

What a contrast! In Christ's baptism, John, and probably many others, were about him; in his temptation, he was alone with Satan and the wild beasts. Baptized in the river Jordan; tempted in the wilderness. At his baptism the heavens opened, the Spirit descended "in bodily shape like a dove," and the voice of the eternal God was heard saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." In his temptation he met his enemy (hence the enemy of the human race) face to face at a great disadvantage, without a friendly human hand near—the scene being made only the more hideous by the roar of the wild beasts coming up from the wilderness.

The whole life of Christ is intensely interesting to every pious heart; yet some events stand out like mountain peaks above the plain of general inspiration. One of these is the temptation. "The story of Christ's temptation is as unique as Christ's character." There is nothing like it in all the annals of the world's eventful history. The inquisitive mind will naturally ask, Why was Christ subject to temptations? Why was it necessary for the pure, spotless Son of God to condescend to meet in mortal combat Satan, the archenemy of man, the embodiment of all impu-

rities? There is divine philosophy in it, which I think is at least partially revealed in the following suggestions:

(1) Ever since man's prospects were blighted in Eden, he has been more or less under the dominion of sin. Jesus, having been acknowledged by the Father as the Son of his delight, is about ready to proclaim himself a deliverer. "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19). Christ is girding himself for life's conflicts. He desires to reach down, take humanity by the hand, and lead it out from under Satan's bondage into the light and liberty of God across the tide.

(2) The Saviour must prove to be the superior of Satan. To do so will inspire confidence in him, thus causing the race to co-operate with him in the glorious work of human redemption. Man must be a coworker in the remedial system of grace. Not that God could not save him independent of his exertions, but, in obtaining the highest spiritual blessings, he has honored man by requiring his co-operation. Before a ship is permitted to ride upon the crested billows of the ocean, it is *tried* (tested) to ascertain if it be seaworthy. So it seems that before Jesus was ready to launch out upon the Atlantic of life as humanity's leader over its dark waste of waters to the

haven of eternal repose, it was necessary for him to pass through the severest ordeal of temptations through which human nature has ever been called upon to pass.

(3) That Jesus might be able to succor us when we are tempted, and to be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities." Had Christ not been tempted, he could not have sympathized with us when temptations assail us. He certainly could not have placed our case before the Father so effectually. He is our influential Friend in the King's court—ever ready to carry the cause of God's wayward children, pleading the wiles of Satan and the weaknesses of human nature. Standing now, as it were, with one hand upon the throne of God, and the other upon the head of the penitent Christian, hear him say, "Father, forgive them;" I know all about humanity, its environments, and what it is to live in the very atmosphere of sin. Lord, have mercy upon them, pass by their imperfections and cleanse them from all unrighteousness. As suggested by Bro. J. B. Briney, there should be only two in the conflict. Had the angels of light been there in the contest, Satan might have claimed that his defeat was due to the assistance of the heavenly host. Had demons from the lower regions come to Satan's rescue, he could have said, It is very true I lost the victory, but it was owing to the failure on the part of my emissaries. Had they done their duty as I did, the victory would easily have been in my favor.

(4) **JESUS** should become acquainted with a world of sin; and the method by which his spiritual work was to be begun and carried out should be made known. Doubtless, having lived in comparative obscurity, with no wicked thoughts, words or actions to tarnish his pure life, he may not have been up to this time fully acquainted with sin. And then, he was coming with a new doctrine. The method by which he proposed to establish and increase his kingdom was new in the history of the world. Proposing to conquer the enemy by saving his foes, and propagating everything that is good; coming forth to the world's conquest with the rod of love in one hand, and the olive branch of peace in the other, was "something new under the sun." It was necessary for these principles to be fully revealed and emphasized; and it seems the divine way of doing it was by a personal encounter with the great dragon, the universal enemy of our race.

#### I. THE FIRST TEMPTATION.

"Before we can properly estimate the temptation of **JESUS**, we must fix a standard by which to judge of the force of temptation. All temptations result from the excitement of some lust or desire. (Jas. i. 14.) The more intense the desire excited, other things being equal, the greater the temptation. Human experience teaches also, that, other things being equal, the more cunningly the sinfulness of a wrong act is disguised, the more easily are we induced to commit it. Evidently, then, the force of a

temptation is to be estimated by considering the degree of desire excited, and the skill with which the sinfulness of the proposed act is disguised. When these two circumstances exist in the highest degree, we have the strongest temptations" (New Testament Commentary, McGarvey, p. 41). With this standard before us, we will consider the force of temptation brought upon Jesus, the Christ of God.

(1) Think of his fast of forty days. Methinks we can only faintly imagine the ravages of hunger, having never passed through such an ordeal. Though, doubtless, an intense desire for something to eat had been excited, his mind seems to have been so completely engaged, he did not realize his true condition until the forty days had passed.

(2) Satan's suggestion, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Satan brought on the attack. The peculiar significance of the temptation grew out of God's confession of his Son at the Jordan, and Christ's expressed desire to "fulfil all righteousness." Satan reasons thus: The Son of God, and starving! It is claimed that the almighty fiat spoke worlds into existence, why not just at a word convert these stones into bread? You need the bread; and, if you are the Son of God, you can change stones into bread. Certainly there is nothing wrong in so doing, especially in time of such great necessity. It would only show your power.

(3) There would certainly have been no sin, *per se*, in converting stones into bread; later, Jesus fed thousands

with a few loaves and fishes. But now to have heeded Satan's suggestion would have manifested a lack of trust in God. Hence the Saviour's reply: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Deut. viii. 3). "Israel had been led by God into the wilderness, where there was no bread, had been subjected to intense hunger there, and had been fed by bread from heaven. Moses explains that this was to teach them that 'man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God'; that is, by every means which God may appoint. Jesus finds in this a precedent for himself. He, too, had been led by God into the wilderness, where there was no bread, and was now suffering from consequent hunger. The duty of Israel is now his duty, for his circumstances are now like theirs. They sinned by murmuring against Moses, and by proposing to seek bread in their own way; that is, by returning to Egypt. (Ex. xvi. 1-9.) He will commit a similar sin if, distrustful of God, he seeks to turn stones into bread. They were taught to rely upon the God who brought them into trouble to deliver them from it. This, now, is his duty, and he accepts the precedent as his guide" (New Testament Commentary, McGarvey, p. 41).

(4) In addition to this, it is wise to look with at least suspicion upon whatever is suggested by Satan or his emissaries. We know he is friend to neither humanity nor divinity. His whole influence is against the interest of the

race. Satan is the enemy of all righteousness; hence all his suggestions look in the direction of sin, and are, therefore, contrary to the welfare of humanity.

(5) The promptness of Christ's reply is significant. Expel wrong at once. Have courage to speak out promptly against the suggestions of Satan and sin. There is danger if you linger. Decide immediately in favor of the right; and, having decided, argue not the question, but quote the Scripture applicable to the case, and by so doing foil the tempter at once. Time fails me to tell of the many who have gone to the grave in disgrace in consequence of not positively saying "no" at the right time. "When a young man is offered a glass of wine for the first time, be it by a hand ever so fair, a voice ever so winsome, and a face ever so radiant, all his interests, present and prospective, require him to say politely, but very positively, 'No.' Why, surely there can be no evil in a simple glass of wine—just one glass—only this one glass. Thus the siren may sing; but remember that one glass of wine—the first one—may contain the drunkard of the future. One little egg may seem very innocent and harmless, but that one apparently harmless egg may contain the deadly viper of the future. Put that egg in your bosom, and presently it becomes a wriggling, hissing, stinging serpent" ("Temptations of Christ," J. B. Briney, p. 43).

(6) He who thinks we live by bread alone, will make that the great object of life—will have it at any cost.



There are so many who have never looked beyond the temporal concerns of life. They have low and sordid views of life and are chained to the groveling things of time and sense. They are willing to sell this life, with its interests, for a mess of pottage. The pages of history are filled with the daring deeds of many whose ambition never reached beyond the grave. However, he who fully realizes that this existence is not all—that there is a life beyond the tomb—will the more earnestly seek the Bread of Life, that comes down from heaven to satisfy the demands of the hungry soul. Reader, do not live for this life alone; remember it is only a foretaste of the life to come. “Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”

## II. THE SECOND TEMPTATION.

(1) “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.” So far as I know, it is generally thought all the surroundings favor the northeast corner of the temple wall as being the place where the second temptation occurred. How Satan took Christ there we know not. Suffice it to say, he took him to the appointed place—a place far enough above the bed of the

Kidron for a fall to at least endanger life. Notice that Satan also presents this temptation in the hypothetical form—"If thou," etc.; I do not say you are the Son of God, but such has been said; and if you are, cast yourself down. God will take care of you; it will show your trust in God; and it will convince the Jews you are under divine protection.

In the first temptation Jesus reminds Satan that to do as he suggested would show a lack of trust in God. So, in his second attack, Satan intimated that for Christ not to cast himself down would also manifest a lack of trust in God. That is the way Satanic majesty deals with us—if he can not lead us astray by showing "his cloven foot," he "transforms himself into an angel of light." At one time he whispers to the impenitent, "You are not good enough;" at another time, "You are too good," or "There are some in the church you can not fellowship." So, Satan is continually storming the whole citadel of human nature—sweeping from one extreme to the other.

(2) Satan is not good at quoting Scripture—he either adds to it, or deducts therefrom. In his conversation with Eve he said, "Thou shalt *not* surely die"—adding the little word *not* to what God had said; and upon that pivot turned the destiny of the whole human race. In his second onslaught upon the Saviour, he deducted from God's word, leaving out the expression "to keep thee in all thy ways." He seems to have been preaching the doctrine that if any

one is really a child of God he is forever safe—*can not be lost*. He was laboring to make the impression that God had promised unconditional protection and deliverance to his children; that, although they might unnecessarily place themselves under circumstances of danger, still God had pledged his word that no permanent disaster should overtake them. “It is only when one makes the ways of God his ways, that Jehovah’s pledge of protection and deliverance can be safely claimed. Whoever unnecessarily puts himself in the way of temptation, and thus courts danger, does it at the peril of his soul. If one goes into a saloon or other houses of death, he must not expect to be attended by the angel of the Lord” (“The Temptations of Christ,” Briney, pp. 70, 71).

From Satan’s course in this temptation we can learn how easy it is to convert God’s truth into a base falsehood. Let us not handle the word of God deceitfully. So many quote the Scriptures to suit themselves and their theory—adding something here, deducting something there. You had better have a millstone hanged about your neck and be cast into the sea than be unfaithful in handing out God’s word to the people. Preach it, tell it as it is, if it destroys every theory you ever had. Remember, it is not *theory* the world needs, but the plain, unvarnished word of God, unmixed with human opinions.

(3) Christ’s reply: “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” Must not put God to an unnecessary test. We

do this frequently. Though the Bible teaches the Lord will protect his own, it is wrong for his children to go out of his way to put him to the proof—to test him as to the fulfilling of his promise. We should not be reckless, rushing into needless danger, and then claim security, resting upon the assurance that the Father careth for his own. The Saviour teaches that no man is able to pluck the sheep out of his Father's hand; and Paul says, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." It is certainly doing injustice to God's word, and putting the Father to an unnecessary test, to claim from these Scriptures that God's child can not wander from the fold and be lost. We should always deal fairly with our heavenly Father; and, while relying upon his love and mercy, be not unmindful of his justice. While there are many great and exceeding precious promises in God's word, by proper research we will find they rest upon conditions. While the first temptation shows a lack of trust, the second manifests too much trust.

### III. THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

Satan carries the Saviour to a mountain-top, and shows him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them in a moment of time, as Luke relates. Then the world was principally under Roman rule. The Roman eagles were

dancing in the sunlight of almost every nation. The city of Rome was in her glory, situated upon her seven hills. Tiberius was on the bloody throne; and the whole earth trembled under the majestic tread of the Cæsars.

“The kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.” What a sight to behold! What Jesus must have seen: A sea of people, proud and wicked cities, lofty temples, the commerce of the world—all, all must have passed before the Saviour in a moment, by the assistance of his vivid imagination, aided by the descriptive powers of the great tempter of our race. “All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou, therefore, wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” The world rested in the hands of the wicked one and the Saviour. Satan, of course, could only give what belonged to him; but had he given his part, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them would have been the possession of God’s Son, for he already had the part which was not owned by the enemy of man.

“All these will I give thee,” etc.; as much as to say, This is what you seek—my way to obtain it is the easier. Christ’s way was through a life of privation and self-sacrifice. It was through the garden of sorrow, the bloody sweat, by the ruthless and shameful cross, by saving his foes, and propagating everything that is good. Satan’s

way was: Only *worship me—just bow the knee to me, and the work is over, the victory won.* Wonderful proposition this! Satan proposes to attack the very throne of God; not satisfied with even a quiet confession of his superiority, he desired the Saviour's submission to be final, full and complete. The question is whether truth will yield to falsehood, light to darkness, good to evil; whether the moral universe shall crumble, the divine government be destroyed, and time and eternity shrouded in universal night. The problem is whether innocence shall bow to the embodiment of all meanness, truth to the father of lies, and heaven to endless ruin. Notice, Satan proposes to buy the homage he asks. Finding Jesus clothed in the garb of humility, he seems to think Christ was for sale. It is a wonderful price to offer—far more than is necessary to buy a great part of the human race. "If thou be the Son of God" is omitted now. Why? Doubtless Satan did not think it wise to suggest his sonship when the proposition to *worship him* was made.

Twice the destiny of the whole human race depended upon the action of a single individual—first, Adam; then, Christ. Methinks earth, heaven and perdition are interested in the decision—what will it be? Will right or wrong triumph? If Jesus yields, the foundation of the divine government is overthrown, and universal darkness and chaos reign. Rejoice, O heaven; listen, O earth; let the regions of darkness tremble while the decision is pro-

nounced—"Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." In imagination I see the angels hovering over the battlements of heaven, and gazing with astonishment and anxiety upon the earth, while the mighty conflict was going on in the wilderness. When, with the sword of truth in hand, Jesus drove the tempter back for the last time, and victory perched upon the banner of the Saviour, methinks, while some angelic messenger flew to earth to administer to his necessities, others with shouts of joy and peans of victory made the universe vocal with praise.

In the language of Bro. J. H. Fuller: "His temptations will be found to contain in a most concentrated form all that tries us. Are we ever allured to put flesh and blood above spirit? Matter above mind? This world of a few years, above eternity that is endless? The created above the Creator? The word of man or devil above the word of God? So was he; but he resisted; so may we. Are we ever enticed into making a display of ourselves? Into a foolhardy trial of the laws of our being? Into a denial of our relations to the Infinite? Into the assumption of the all-sufficiency of ourselves? So was he. But he resisted. So may we. Are we ever tempted to power, authority and human glory, at the expense of humility? To make a show of greatness, at the expense of individual integrity and honor? To look at our mission here solely from a selfish aim, at the expense of the world-wide view

intended for man? So was he; but he replied, 'Get thee hence, Satan.' So may we."

## LESSONS.

(1) The skill and wisdom of Satan were manifested. His attack was upon the one on whom depended the destinies of the race.

(2) The temptation shows how Satan can be resisted:  
(a) By reverence for God's will; (b) by acquaintance with God's word.

(3) Satan takes advantage of our necessities.

(4) To an honest heart, temptation will frequently come in pleasureable suggestions. Many take on an air of innocence, or even a form of duty, like turning stones into bread.

(5) Satan does not always show his "cloven foot."

(6) He will attack us especially where he thinks we are weakest.

(7) God's word is the Christian's weapon of warfare.

(8) Turn from temptation immediately.

(9) Satan will leave us if we resist him.

(10) Blessings come after we resist Satan.



## SERMON IX.

### PARABLES OF CHRIST.

"And he spake many things unto them in parables."—MATT. XIII. 3.

Christ's parables confirm his divinity. To me they have the stamp of omnipotence almost as clearly as his miracles have. They are so deceptive as to import. Your first impression is that almost any one can write a parable; but, after reflection and effort, you are tempted to conclude no one can; and, in fact, it seems that Christ exhausted the stock, having used all the parables in reach. A parable is a kind of dark-lantern illustration, drawn from everyday life. Each has a basic principle, or central idea; and the parable must be interpreted in the light of the main thought. As the sun is the center of the solar system, around which the planetary worlds revolve, so there is a leading thought in each parable, around which the subordinate thoughts revolve. As the sun lights up the entire system of which it is the center, so the leading idea in the parable illustrates it, and more or less gives force, expression and meaning to the whole.

With these statements as leaders, we will now briefly consider some of Christ's parables. We will pay our respects, first, to some of those pertaining to the gospel. The value of the gospel, or kingdom, is set forth in the following language: "The kingdom of heaven is like

unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field" (Matt. xiii. 44). Yes, many would much rather lose all their earthly possessions than be deprived of the gospel. It is so precious to their souls. It is the instrument by which they have been enlightened, their hearts purified, and their weary feet turned to the cross. It is the light of the world, sheds a halo of glory around the tomb, and conducts us to the home of the blest, illuminated by the countenance of our blessed Redeemer. There is so much embraced in the gospel. Its facts are worth far more than nuggets of gold to the storm-tossed mariner upon life's tempestuous sea. What would this life be without the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ? Had these events not transpired, had they not been presented and believed, death would have been much worse than an eternal sleep; darkness would have shrouded the tomb; and there would have been no certain light concerning the future life. This world would have been a night without a day, a universe without a sun, a long, dreary time of despair without one ray of hope from a far-away shore to send its golden gleams through this dismal veil. There would have been no expression of loyalty to the great King had it not been for the commandments of the gospel. We should have no will of our own, but should do the Father's will. We should obey the gospel; for "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven

with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

And then, the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel—who would not rather have them than a treasure hidden in the field? I would rather know my sins are forgiven than have all the hidden and unhidden treasures of this world. All my sins blotted out in the blood of the Lamb, and myself standing acquitted in the presence of my heavenly Father, is knowledge superior in value to a treasure sublime. The indwelling of the Spirit, eternal life, and many other promises of the gospel, too numerous to now mention, have values which can not be computed.

The call of the gospel is another thing challenging our attention. Paul says: “Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II. Thess. ii. 14). One parable bearing especially upon this phase of the gospel is found in Matt. xx. 1-16. Here the call is represented as taking place at different hours of the day, or at various stages of life’s period; and those who went in at the eleventh hour received as much as those who went first. But remember, the eleventh-hour men entered the first opportunity; for they say, “No man hath hired us.” This gives no comfort to the man who claims to repent upon a dying-bed, for he can not truthfully say, “No man hath hired me.” I do

not say it is impossible to return to the Lord at that late hour, but I do say it is not at all safe to wait until then. A Christian—an experienced physician—told me not long since, of all those claiming to repent upon a sick-bed, in his practice, he had never known one sincere case. Cry for mercy while in danger; and when restored to health, curse the same God, as well as refuse to obey him? Ungrateful creatures! How could persons of such wicked hearts conform themselves to the associations of heaven, if there? The parable teaches that the gospel calls the human race in life's morning, at noontide, and in the dewy evening; and its ringing, triumphant sound is heard from the earliest days of accountability to the shades of evening, when "life's sinking sun" sends its rays back from the western shore.

The Saviour would furthermore teach us by the parable of the "great supper" (Luke xiv. 15-24) that the call of the gospel is universal. In addition to inviting those bidden, he said: "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." The Lord's house is not full yet. There is still room for all who will come. When the redeemed hosts from earth's battlefields are safely anchored in the port of glory, there will still be room in our Father's

house for the countless millions of the lost, had they only accepted the Saviour, and walked in his footsteps to the end of the pilgrimage. The great Commission's call is universal. "Go," yea, go wherever man can be found, and by the gospel call him to glory and renown.

In the parable of the sower, recorded in Matt. xiii. 3-23; Mark iv. 4-20; Luke viii. 4-15, the power of the gospel is portrayed. The heart is the ground; God's word, the seed. Just as well expect a crop without ground as a Christian without a spiritual heart, which includes the intellect, sensibilities and will. Just as well expect a crop without seed as a Christian without God's word sown in the hearts of the people. Need not expect direct operation of Spirit to make Christians. God's pure, unadulterated word is for that purpose. Of course, God's word is the instrument by which the Spirit does the work. The pure word of God sown in an honest heart will make nothing but a Christian. If you desire to produce a Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, or any other *ism*, sow that *ism* in the heart. If you wish to produce simply a Christian, and a Christian simply, sow God's word simply, and simply sow God's word in the human heart. Seed under proper conditions will germinate, and finally yield a rich harvest, if well cultivated; so God's word placed in the heart under suitable surroundings will come forth, and, if properly cared for, will produce "some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold." "Where

the word of a king is, there is power." As Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, there is wonderful power in his word, the gospel.

By it we are quickened. (Ps. cxix. 50, 93; John vi. 63.)

By it we are begotten. (I. Cor. iv. 4-15; Jas. i: 18.)

Faith is produced by the word of God. (Parable of sower—John xx. 30, 31; Acts xv. 7; Rom. x. 17.)

It indirectly purifies the heart; for it produces faith, which purifies the heart. (Acts xv. 9.)

It indirectly justifies; for it produces faith, which justifies. (Rom. v. 1.)

Sanctification comes by the Word. (John xvii. 17.)

By it we are born again. (I. Pet. i. 22-25.)

It is the guide for man. (Ps. cxix. 105.)

The case of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us we are shut up to the gospel, and no other guide will be given to conduct us to the far-away home of the obedient soul. The gospel is the only source of spiritual illumination given to the children of men to-day, so far as the writer knows. God's word is the source of spiritual joy. (Ps. xix. 8; cxix. 111; Jer. xv. 16; John xv. 11; I. John i. 4; I. Thess. iv. 13-18.) It is the blessed torchlight of immortality, situated upon the bosom of the sea of time to guide sinners to the cross, and God's believing children home.

The extension of the gospel is taught in the parable of the mustard seed. (Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 31, 32;

Luke xiii. 18, 19.) As the small mustard seed grows to be greatest among herbs, so the small beginnings of the gospel will increase until its light reaches from pole to pole. The little stone cut out of the mountain without hands will continue to roll until it fills the whole earth. Lord, may the time speedily come when a knowledge of thee will cover the earth as waters do the channels of the great deep. Roll on the tide of missionary interest until it covers the dark places of earth, and captures the world for King Jesus.

Those parables respecting the *soul* next claim our attention. The two recorded in Luke xv. 1-10 touch upon the value of the soul. Jesus would teach the murmuring and criticising Pharisees and scribes that it was more consistent for him to seek lost souls than for them to be so much exercised in regard to a lost sheep, or a woman in reference to a lost coin; for a soul is of so much greater value than either. Furthermore, Christ would remind them that heaven itself is interested in the souls of men; for joy is there when a sinner turns to God. And then in the fifteenth chapter of Luke (11-32) the wandering soul is taught its duty. Return to the Father's house. If you will come back in Heaven's appointed way, which is by faith and obedience to the truth, God will put on you a new robe, shoes on your feet, a ring on your finger, and a new song in your mouth. "Turn you, O turn you, for why will you die" in your sins?

The *sins* of men come in for their share of attention in the parables of the Saviour. Man's *ingratitude* and its reward are revealed to us in a very graphic way in Matt. xviii. 23-35. Reader, it would be well for you to read the parable carefully before listening to what I have to say. Lord, deliver me from an ingrate. It matters not how much you do for some persons, they never appreciate it, or think you have done any more than your duty. You may make ever so many sacrifices for them, put yourself to the trouble repeatedly to accommodate them; but they always appear to think you should have done more. Ingratitude is a terrible principle. It certainly originated in perdition, and will go there for its reward.

One great need of this world now is righteousness; and it was thus during the personal reign of Christ, as we learn from Matt. xxii. 1-14. The man who did not have the wedding garment was not prepared to enjoy the feast; neither is the one who does not practice righteousness prepared to enjoy the things God has in store for those who love him. The clearest definition of righteousness found in the Bible is given by David, when he says, "For all thy commandments are righteousness" (Ps. cxix. 172). When John refused to baptize the Saviour, the response was given: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." John the beloved said: "He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is



righteous" (I. John iii. 7). In reference to righteousness, Paul says: "That as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. v. 21). From all these passages we can have an idea how needful is right living. If we fail to do right, the Lord will remind us we have not on the wedding garment. "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. xxii. 14).

Worldly-mindedness is another thing condemned by Christ, as we ascertain by reflecting on Luke xii. 13-21. In this connection we are taught that man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. So many act as if they thought it did. In fact, there are very few, comparatively, who do not act as if they considered this life as all—the *summum bonum* of man's existence—a great board of trade where there is a manifestation of wonderful greed, the entire thought being stocks and bonds and general gain. Remember, when you have great possessions for many years laid up, that very night your soul may be required of you. So, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matt. vi. 19, 20).

Unprofitable servants are condemned in the parable of the barren fig tree. "Nothing but leaves" tells the story of many a life. The fruitless tree will be cut down—"it cumbereth the ground." Representing human beings as trees, there are three kinds: The one that bears good fruit, the one that bears bad fruit, the one that bears no fruit. According to the Bible, the fate of the tree that bears no fruit is the same as the one that bears bad fruit—both will be lost. There is many a church-member living a negative life who will doubtless be disappointed in that great day—expecting to be saved, but will hear the sentence, "Depart, I know you not." While we have much to do to be saved, we can do *nothing* and be lost. The current of life is not set heavenward—must stem the tide to reach the land of promise. The one-talent man was cast into outer darkness—not because he misused or squandered his lord's money, but because he did not use it at all—did not improve the talent he had. Every sin enumerated in Matt. xxv. 31-46, where the Saviour is describing a scene which will take place upon the plains of judgment, is a sin of omission. Not only must we fail to bring forth bad fruit, but must produce good fruit if we wish to hear the welcome plaudit, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

The Jews rejecting Christ is another sin to which Jesus alludes in the parable of the wicked husbandman. (Matt. xxi. 33-46.)

The importance of a practical Christian life is emphasized by the Saviour in his parabolic teaching. The result of a watchful life and of a careless profession are exemplified in the parable of the ten virgins. (Matt. xxv. 1-13.) Keep your lamps trimmed and burning, for you know not the day nor the hour when death shall call for you, nor "when the Son of man cometh." Always be ready. Do not let the lamp of Christian profession go out. The Christian lamp, lighted at the cross, is kept in proper condition by a life of prayer, active service in the vineyard, and entire consecration to the cause of all causes.

Jesus calls our attention to the necessity of making the best use of our advantages. (Matt. xxv. 14-30.) "Where little is given, little is required;" but something is required of all. Whether much or little is given you, remember the Lord will not hold that one guiltless who wraps his talent in the napkin of indolence, and buries it in the barren soil of neglect.

The gradual development of the kingdom is taught where Christ said: "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv. 26-29). Whether this refers to the first days of the soul's new life in Christ, to when the first faint promise of a Saviour was given, or to the time when the seed-thoughts of the kingdom culminated in the birth of Christ's church on Pentecost, it is "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear."

Compassion for the afflicted is exemplified in the lesson of the good Samaritan. (Luke x. 30-37.) Help each other. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Many have reformed and led useful lives by being convinced that some one cared for them. The drunkard who was lying in a stupor, with his face turned to the sun, was led to resolve to quit his cups by the kind act of some unknown passer-by who gently placed a handkerchief over his bloated face. Believing now that some one cared for him, he decided to change his life, which he did, and became a very efficient preacher of the ancient gospel. Eternity alone can tell the result of simply laying the handkerchief over the inebriate's face. Congregations sprang up like magic in his wake; and in at least one place, where he was a prime mover in planting the cause of the primitive gospel, there has been for many years a Christian college, which is the *alma mater* of different preachers now leading many to Christ. So, let us, like the good Samaritan, care for the suffering, bind up the wounded, and send them rejoicing on their way.

God claims all our service, as we learn from Luke xvii. 7-10. There are only two to serve—Satan and God. We can not serve both at once. Satan deserves none of our time—we owe it all to Christ. Even if we obey all the commandments, doing our whole duty, we are still unprofitable servants, unworthy of salvation. The pervading influence of Christianity is emphasized in the parable of the leaven,

recorded in Matt. xiii. 33. As the leaven hidden in three measures of meal leavened the whole lump, so the pure gospel of Christ is being hidden in the heart of the human race; and I trust it will finally leaven the whole lump of humanity.

In conclusion, we will briefly consider some of the parables pertaining to purity. Preparation for eternity is insisted on in Luke xvi. 1-12. Not only is it taught in this connection, but in many other places in the Bible. "Prepare to meet thy God" rings in many ways in Heaven's message to man. So many act as if expecting to live always. We should ever remember "this world is not our home." This is only a probationary state, where God expects us to prepare for the home of the soul.

The final separation of the good from the bad is graphically depicted by the Saviour in Matt. xxv. 31-46. In imagination I see the crowded millions from the storm-swept shores of time assembled upon the plains of judgment. The wicked are situated upon Christ's left, the good upon his right. What a contrast in these two companies. On the left is Satan; on the right is Christ. On the left is Cain; on the right, Abel. On the left are all the wicked; on the right, all the good. Darkness is on the left; light on the right. Weeping on the left; rejoicing on the right. To those on the left He says, Depart; to those on the right, Come, wear the crown.

Further recompense of the good and bad is portrayed in the teaching of Jesus in Luke xvi. 19-31. The rich man was tormented; Lazarus was resting in Abraham's bosom. While the tongue of Dives was parched, Lazarus was drinking at the fountain of living water. While Dives was where hope was a stranger, and where mercy could never reach him, Lazarus was in the home of the blest, where mercy and peace would forever reign.

## SERMON X.

### CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee.”—JOHN II 11.

In both the Old and the New Testaments are recorded many miracles. Creation was a miracle—in fact, everything began in a miracle. Webster defines the word thus: “A wonder, or wonderful thing. Specially, an event or effort contrary to the established constitution and course of things, or a deviation from the known laws of nature; a supernatural event.” It is sometimes contended there is no such thing as a miracle. How does any one know that? As suggested by H. W. Everest, if any one knows there is no such thing as a miraculous event, he has miraculous knowledge. To know *that*, he must know everything that has ever taken place in the universe, or is now taking place. If you know everything that has ever transpired, and all that is now transpiring in all the universe of God, is not your knowledge a miracle of itself? But that is not all. To know there is no such thing as a miracle, you must not only know everything that has ever transpired, and that is transpiring, but you must be perfectly familiar with everything that will ever transpire. If not, the very thing you do not know may be a miracle. Certainly, then, no one can know there is not such a thing as a miracle, without being clothed with power divine.

Christ's miracles were to attest his divinity. Nicodemus said unto Christ: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him" (John iii. 2). "Many other signs [miracles] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John xx. 30, 31). The testimony concerning the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth has been confirmed by some of the most stupendous miracles the world ever witnessed. Let us now consider some of Christ's many miracles.

I. First, those touching the elements of nature challenge our attention.

(a) We behold Jesus stilling the storm. (Matt. viii. 23-27; Luke viii. 22-25.) "Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, Master, we perish! Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they, being afraid, wondered, saying one to another,



What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him." Methinks it was a beautiful morning. The sun lifted his head above the eastern horizon, sending his rays of splendor out on the bosom of blue Galilee. The boat is sailing, and the Master has fallen asleep. Soon the prospects for a bright day are not so promising. The clouds are gathering, and floating above the bosom of the azure sea. The storm king comes rushing down from the mountains, shaking the lightning from his fingers, and hurling the winds from his fist, which makes the sea mad. The waves rise and foam, the boat rocks and trembles, and the disciples cry out: "Master, Master, we perish!" Then Jesus arose and rebuked the winds, which folded their wings, and retreated from the scene as if pursued by some great monster. When the disciples saw the winds had departed, and the waves were rocked to sleep in the "cradle of the deep" by the mandate of the Saviour, "Peace, be still," they wondered "what manner of man is this" that controls the wind and waters.

(*b*) Next, we behold Jesus walking upon the bosom of the sea. (Matt. xiv. 22-33; John vi. 15-21.) Immediately after feeding the five thousand, he constrained his disciples to enter a ship and go before him to the other side, while he sent the multitude away. He went into a mountain, and there poured out his soul to his Father in prayer. Jesus prayed—he often prayed—seems to have spent whole nights in prayer. They had doubtless just tempted him

by endeavoring to force him to be king. He seems to have preferred spending most of that night in communion with his Father rather than with his disciples. During the fourth watch of the night, look out upon the sea. The blue Galilee is again disturbed. The waves rise, the little vessel is riding upon the bosom of the crested billows, the winds are playing familiarly with the hoary locks of the waters. In the distance a form is seen. It soon assumes the form of a man. Hush! it is Jesus walking upon the sea. Beneath his majestic tread the waves are rocked to sleep and become, as it were, like granite where touched by his precious feet. When those in the ship saw the sea converted into a solid pavement by his heavenly touch, well might they come and worship him, saying, "Of a truth, thou art the Son of God."

II. Those miracles which satisfied hunger and thirst now demand our attention.

(a) He fed multitudes—on one occasion, five thousand. (Matt. xiv. 15-21; Mark vi. 37-44; John vi. 5-14.) At another time he fed four thousand. (Matt. xv. 32-38; Mark viii. 1-9.) The people had been following him three days, and were without anything to eat; and he was not willing to send them away fasting. Having learned there were on hand a few loaves and fishes, he had the multitude seated on the green grass in companies "by hundreds and by fifties." While the grass was growing beautifully beneath their feet, flowers filling the air with their fragrance,

and the aerial songster warbling his lay to his distant mate, the loaves and fishes were being multiplied until the hunger of the multitude was satisfied. The feast being ended, many baskets of fragments being taken up "that nothing be lost," the multitude was sent away, and Christ went into the mountain apart to pray.

(b) In Cana of Galilee his divine power was displayed in supplying the nuptial feast with the greatest abundance of choice wine. As Jesus, his mother, and his disciples were invited to the marriage, it may have been a favorite relative that was casting lots with another for future happiness. The supply of wine failing, Mary said to her son: "They have no wine." Why carry such information to an invited guest? Why not go to the ruler of the feast with the message? She must have known whom to approach with the statement. She certainly knew he was clothed with power divine. I know not what convinced her—whether it was the divine manifestations concerning his birth, the angel's song which spread the news that the earth cradled a King, what transpired at his baptism, the victory over Satan in the wilderness, or what; but something must have satisfied her that he was not only the son of Mary, but "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Christ reminded his mother that his hour had not yet come; but she requested the servants to do whatever he commanded them. Then Jesus asked them to fill six

water-pots with water to the brim, which they did. When they began to draw, it was evident the water had been converted into first-class wine. It was so pure and good the governor of the feast highly complimented it to the bridegroom, and insisted that the usual order had been reversed by saving the best wine till the last. Thanks to our heavenly Father for giving us a Saviour who could perform such wonders, thus manifesting his glory and confirming his disciples in their infant faith.

III. Now let us consider a few of those miracles bearing upon temporal maladies.

(a) The blessed Master is in Peter's house; and Peter's mother-in-law lies "sick of a fever." Christ touches her; the fever departs; she ministers to them. Thou fever, that hast scorched so many cheeks, consumed so many frames—O thou which hast created so many aches and pains, hast wrung so many tears from human hearts—thou canst not stand before the sinless Son of God. Thou art too weak, thine arm is too short, to withstand the majestic touch of him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

(b) Passing through Samaria and Galilee, in yon little village are ten lepers. Seeing Jesus, they cry for mercy. Son of God, canst thou cure that loathsome, that dreaded disease? I know at Peter's house the fever was driven back by the very wave, as it were, of thy precious hands; but what about leprosy? Can its ravages be stayed at thy will?

Jesus said unto the lepers: "Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass as they went, they were cleansed." When one, a Samaritan, saw he was healed, he returned, glorifying God, and praising the Lord Jesus for his manifold blessings. "Where are the nine?" Not more than one in ten appreciate the blessings bestowed upon them by our Father's hand. Then, from Luke xvii. 11-19, we learn Christ had power over leprosy—that disease which baffles the skill of the best physicians—that malady which is the fit emblem of sin, and which causes the patient to cry out, "Unclean! unclean!"

(c) "And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak" (Mark vii. 31-37).

(d) Blindness is one of the very greatest of temporal maladies. It is a serious thing to have an attack of fever; worse to be a deaf mute; and still worse to be blind. Many miracles had been wrought before the coming of the Saviour, but restoring sight to the blind was something new. In the Old Testament no miracle of the kind is recorded. The power of touching the eyes of the blind and admitting the light was reserved for the spotless Lamb who came "in the fulness of time." Blind Bartimeus (Mark x. 46-52) and the man born blind (John ix. 1-7) are cases in point. By faith Bartimeus was made whole. His eyes being opened to the light of day, it was doubtless no longer necessary for him to sit by the wayside and beg. No longer a beggar in the dark, I trust he earned his living by honest toil, enjoyed the sunlight, and beheld the smiles which played upon the cheeks of his friends and loved ones, and every other beauty upon which the eye can feast. The man blind from his birth had his eyes anointed with clay, was directed to go to the pool of Siloam and wash, which he did, and came seeing. Blessed One who could unstop the ears of the deaf, make the dumb sing, drive the mists away, and permit the blind to see the "unclouded day"!

IV. Next, we will view some of those miracles pertaining to evil spirits.

(a) In Matt. ix. 32-35 we have an account of the healing of a dumb demoniac. Jesus cast out the demon, "the

dumb spake; and the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.”

(b) The healing of a demoniac in the synagogue is described in the following language: “And in the synagogue there was a man which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out” (Luke iv. 33-36).

(c) Listen! “Legion” is among the tombs, crying day and night and cutting himself with stones. The demons, claiming Jesus has come to torment them before the time, desire, if cast out, to enter a herd of two thousand swine, which are near. The Saviour, casting the demons out of the man, permits them to enter the swine, which “ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.” The account of this peculiar event is recorded in Matt. viii. 28-32; Mark v. 1-13; Luke viii. 26-36.

V. We will conclude this article by paying our respects to those miracles respecting the dead.

(a) Jesus at the city of Nain. (Luke vii. 11-18.) He has just healed the centurion's servant at Capernaum; and, with many of his disciples and much people, he is nearing Nain. There is mourning in that city. Death has done his work—has cast a dark mantle of sorrow over another home—a widow has lost her only son. The funeral procession has just passed without the city walls. Christ, approaching, sees the heart-broken mother. Pausing only to say to her, "Weep not," he touches the bier. Listen! Give ear, O earth. The Son of life is in the presence of death. Pall-bearers are waiting, the multitude is in a state of expectation, the heavens in mercy are bending, the mother and other mourners are weeping, while the calm utterance of the Saviour is heard, "Young man, arise." The dead arose, began to speak, and he delivered him to his lonely mother. No wonder fear came upon all; and they glorified God, saying that a great prophet had risen among them and that God had visited his people.

(b) There is great distress in the house at Jairus at Capernaum. (Matt. ix. 18-26; Mark v. 35-43; Luke viii. 49-56.) He had only one daughter, and she was about twelve years of age. Death has claimed her as his victim. Her eyes are closed, her pulse is still, her heart has ceased to beat—they say she is dead. Her parents are feeling as only parents can feel on such occasions; and the mourners are crowding the chamber of death. Jesus puts out all except the parents; and he, Peter, James and John enter the



room where the damsel is lying. She is still and cold and stiff—the life has ebbed away in the morning of its existence. Death, thou mighty king of terrors, stay thy hand; the Conqueror has come. And Jesus “took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And the spirit came again, and she arose straightway; and he commanded to give her meat.”

(c) One other case will complete the recorded list. (John xi.) In Bethany there lived a family of three—two sisters and a brother, seemingly a devoted trio—Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Their home seems to have been one of the special homes of the Saviour. Lazarus was taken sick; and the information was sent to Jesus by the distressed sisters in these words: “He whom thou lovest is sick.” Jesus did not visit him in his sickness; but said it was not unto death, but that he might be glorified thereby. He loved the entire family. After two days he suggested to his disciples: “Let us go unto Judea again.” The disciples insisted that it was not safe to do so. Then Jesus told them: “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” The disciples understood that he had reference to natural sleep; but Jesus said plainly: “Lazarus is dead.” He went to the tomb of Lazarus, which was about two miles from Jerusalem. Mary and Martha were mourning; many Jews were sympathizing; and “Jesus wept” as he approached the grave. Well might the Jews say, “Behold how he

loved him." "Roll away the stone," the Saviour says, and behold him standing over the open grave. He has calmed the storm, walked upon the waves, made the dumb sing, the blind see, and possibly has even raised the unburied dead; but Lazarus is in the tomb, and doubtless dissolution is going on. Listen to that prayer of faith to his Father, and hear that call that rends the air, and makes the welkin ring: "*Lazarus, come forth.*" The voice of Jesus once more thrilled that region of impenetrable darkness which separates us from the world to come; and scarcely were these words spoken, when, like a specter, from the rocky tomb issued a figure swathed indeed in its white and ghastly cerements—with the napkin around the head which had upheld the jaw that four days previously had dropped in death; bound hand and foot and face, but not livid, not horrible; the figure of a youth, with the healthy blood of a restored life flowing through his veins; of a life restored—so tradition tells us—for thirty more long years to life and light and love" (Farrar's "Life of Christ," p. 317). The Bible records only three whom Jesus raised from the dead: an only son, an only daughter, an only brother.

## SERMON XI.

### CHRIST THE GREAT TEACHER.

JOHN III. 2.

The Saviour's sinless life, sublime doctrine and miraculous power confirm the statement of the Jewish ruler: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God." Yes, we know it too; and the wisest in many ages unite in saying, "No other man spake as he spake." Well might all come and sit at his feet, and listen to the words of wisdom falling from his precious lips. No wonder "the common people heard him gladly."

I. First, let us view the Teacher himself. At the very threshold of the investigation we will consider his personal character. All the atheists, infidels, deists and skeptics have searched in vain for one real defect in his thrilling life. It seems his thoughts, words and actions were always pure. Christ lived not so much for himself as for others. He never thought, said or did anything of which he had to repent; was a stranger to worldly ambition; entirely free from prejudice; and laid down his life that the world might be saved through him. So far, then, as pure character is concerned, he stands before the world without a peer.

Was Christ qualified to be the world's greatest teacher? Two things, at least, are necessary for thorough qualifica-

tion on the part of the teacher: First, perfect knowledge of the student; second, thorough knowledge of the lesson, or lessons, to be taught.

Jesus was thoroughly acquainted with man, whom he came to teach. "He knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." Our blessed Saviour was able to turn on the searchlight of truth, to walk through the aisles of every heart, and listen to the secret ponderings of the same. He knew the lessons man needed, how to impart them, and when man was ready to receive them to profit. He understood full well what was to be taught. Though God has veiled himself from men, Jesus had been with him face to face; and well did Christ know him, and was acquainted with all his ways. Though angels desired to look into the scheme of redemption, and though "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," all things connected with sin, Satan, man and God were doubtless understood by the Saviour, even when time was young. Then, relative to qualifications, Jesus fully understood the pupil, man; was entire master of the lesson; and was indeed a very skilful imparter, as is clearly demonstrated by the many lessons recorded in the Bible.

II. Next, we will observe his method of teaching.

(1) Jesus Christ taught in humility. He never thought of himself more highly than he ought to have

thought. Humility was one of the many traits which adorned his inimitable life.

(2) Though always humble, he taught with severity whenever demanded. This is manifest when he said to the traders: "My Father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves;" and then "turned over the tables of the money-changers, and drove out those that sold doves." His withering philippics to the Pharisees, recorded in chapters xv and xxiii of Matthew, give some idea of Christ's severity in denouncing sin. That we may ever remember how heinous is sin, or especially hypocrisy, in the sight of the Lord, it would be well for us to read frequently Matt. xxiii. 13-36.

(3) Man is exalted in Christ's teaching. The parables of the lost sheep and lost coin demonstrate that. He would have us understand the soul is valuable—more so than anything else connected with man. It is more valuable than a sheep or coin, and is of more importance than the return of the boy who has wandered from his father's house. That Christ places quite a high estimate upon the soul is very evident from two questions: "What is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" If Christ were now here, and should ask these two questions, who would not be forcibly impressed with the high estimate he placed upon the inner man? If the first question were asked me, my response would be, Noth-

ing—worse than nothing. If I should be asked the second question, my reply would be, Everything; that is, if it was *my* soul in jeopardy. In these two questions Jesus would teach us the worth and dignity of the human soul.

(4) **Tenderness** was characteristic of the Saviour's teaching, as we learn from such expressions as the following: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."

The sinful woman who bathed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her tresses, is another case in point. (Luke vii. 37-50.) "And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two

debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned unto the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. . . . And he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

(5) Christ's teaching was simple.

(a) It was simple as to place. It was upon the seaside, in his little boat, or on the mountain, that those heaven-born lessons were given, which have exercised such a salutary influence upon many human hearts. Nature's pulpits are splendid places from which to send forth the healing message. Standing or sitting upon the seashore, while the waves were rising and falling upon the bosom of the Sea of Tiberias, the great Teacher poured into the ears of dying

mortal truths which will enlighten the mind, cheer the heart and verberate and reverberate upon the bosom of the stream of time until the resurrection trumpet shall sound. Jesus would have us teach the truth everywhere. In a boat, on the seashore, by the wayside, anywhere and everywhere, tell the story of the Saviour's dying love to the children of men.

(b) Christ Jesus the Lord was simple as to style. His teaching was simple enough for the comprehension of children, sublime enough for the admiration of angels. He drew his illustrations from things with which the people were familiar. At one time they were especially familiar to the farmer; at another, to the vine-grower, and then to the soldier, fisherman, lawyer or physician. Nothing is much more attractive and helpful than simplicity in style. Many sermons when delivered need to be explained. I have heard stated that Bro. J. W. McGarvey said the highest compliment ever paid his preaching was when a little child stepped up to him after preaching, and said: "*I can understand you, Bro. McGarvey.*" Being so childlike in his speech and manner was doubtless one of the prominent reasons the publicans, sinners and common people flocked to the great Teacher.

(6) Jesus spoke as if clothed with authority. He had authority over days, demons, disease and death. "For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." His discourses were not tinged with any spirit



of hesitation or doubt; but, being delivered with authority, breathed forth the air of courage and positive assurance.

Preachers should learn a lesson from the authority with which Jesus delivered his discourses. They should speak with authority in presenting the gospel to the human race. If any one can not speak thus in Christianity, he had better remain silent. What the actor said is often too true, when he stated: "*We* tell a falsehood like it was the truth; and often the *preachers* tell the truth like it was a falsehood." From the pulpit we want no hesitation or doubt; but the truth, "straight from the shoulder," convicting men of sin, and teaching them the way of life and salvation. Christ spake as though he would remind his hearers of what they had forgotten. He spoke from the heart to the heart with all confidence.

(7) Our dear Redeemer was able to silence all critics. The questioning gainsayer always received more than he asked. The arrow of the enemy, spiked with a question, intended to confuse and convict the Saviour, always recoiled, and the arrows of the wicked pierced their own hearts.

(8) In addition to convicting men of sin, and telling them the way to righteousness and peace, he held out three special motives to induce them to aspire to the highest life possible for mortals to reach. The first incentive is the fear of punishment. Jesus of Nazareth would remind us there is an abode of darkness, "where the worm dieth

not, and the fire is not quenched"—where hope is a stranger, and mercy never comes with the cup of cold water to cool the parched tongue.

In the second place, he would furthermore remind us, "There is a land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign"—where storms never rise, troubles never come, and the weary are at rest. In heaven's blissful clime there is nothing to mar or molest the happiness of those who reach the promised land. There God is, Christ reigns, the saints rejoice, and the angelic host fill the enchanted land with the music of the spheres.

Last, the love of God to our ungrateful race is revealed in the following: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." All through the Bible God's love to man is portrayed. We see it in the promise to the outcast progenitors of the race, in the floating ark, in the bow upon the bosom of the cloud, in the bloody sacrifice, and in the deliverance and protection of the Israelites. It is sung by the Psalmist, foretold by the prophets, and its culmination is seen in the life, sufferings, death and resurrection of the world's Redeemer. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his presence—the divine embodiment of divine love.

III. Those whom Jesus taught. He first taught the Jews. "He came unto his own, and his own received him

not." The Jews so much needed a teacher. As a nation they had forgotten God, and had wandered from him. The warning voice of the prophet was heard no more; and there had scarcely been a communication from Heaven for four hundred years. The Jewish rabbi gave forth a hesitating and uncertain sound; and there was hitherto no one to speak with authority, as to the way to our Father's house.

In the Sermon on the Mount, and elsewhere, Christ taught that the heart was the source of sin. He said: "Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man." Jesus taught the source of sin as internal, not external. It commenced in the heart, and manifested itself in the life; instead of beginning in the life, and finally affecting the heart. He corrected the idea of the Jews on the divorce law. He taught them to love their enemies, which was a new doctrine. Christ taught Gentiles as well as Jews. Though his personal reign was especially to the children of Abraham, his ideas, teaching and life were world-wide in their effects, and universal in their tendency. "And think not to say within ourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and

cast into the fire" (Matt. iii. 9, 10). While conversing with the Jewish ruler, Christ informed him he "must be born again." It mattered not if he was a Jew—a descendant of Abraham; to enter the new institution, he must be born of water and the Spirit.

IV. *What* Jesus taught now demands our careful and respectful attention.

(1) He insisted that a universal reign was near, called the kingdom of God, of heaven, and that it consisted not so much in mitered king, with kingdom arrayed in pomp and splendor, as in the reign of God and Christ in the hearts and lives of men. "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Christ in you, the hope of glory, is the one thing needful.

(2) The great battle of the world and for all time is with sin, and not with suffering. The great enemy of man is himself arrayed against himself under the influence of sin. Life is a warfare between good and evil. Harmony, not discord, is nature's law. Sin is responsible for the warfare. Before sin was introduced, duty and desire always agreed, but since then they frequently disagree.

(3) Jesus encouraged forgiveness. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

(4) Christ called attention to the fact that man had a soul, which was the most important part of him. Many act as if they thought they had no soul. Jesus spent no time in defining the soul, but taught it was accountable and immortal. Doubtless, had he thought a knowledge of what the soul was would have been beneficial, he would have given it. But as he has not done so, we need not concern ourselves specially as to its analysis. I have thought the less a preacher knows the more likely he is to grapple with such profound questions as "whom he did foreknow," etc.; and "the wind bloweth," etc.; or, What is the soul?—its whereabouts during the intermediate state, etc. Suffice it to know we have a soul, we are responsible for its life, and that it will last as long as the eternal years of God shall roll.

(5) Christ Jesus taught the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; that God is our Father, and that mankind can be converted into one loving and eternal brotherhood. No one is to be censured for man's condemnation but himself. God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the church are calling the race, through the gospel, into this great spiritual brotherhood; and if any one refuses to hear the call, his condemnation is the work of his own hands. The conditions upon which we enter this brotherhood, the Church of Christ, are expressed in the great Commission and taught by the apostles in Acts. They are faith in Christ, repentance of all sins, and baptism based

upon a confession of faith in Christ. We continue in the family by a consecrated Christian life.

(6) Jesus taught that the human race was capable of the highest elevation. He taught the sacredness of human nature, the worth and dignity of the human soul; that sin had marred the image of divinity in men, but the lost image can be restored by coming in possession of the Son, and drinking in his free Spirit. "But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II. Cor. iii. 18).

(7) According to the Saviour's teaching, it is not only necessary for man to be in God and Christ, but his eternal well-being depends upon both the Father and the Son dwelling in him. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John xiv. 23). "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). What a blessed privilege to be permitted to dwell in divinity, and have divinity dwell in us.

(8) Jesus furthermore taught that sin is death, or, rather, that sin brought death into the world—and all our woes. And then sin is death, for it separates us from life, light, happiness and God.

(9) Christ taught the importance of prayer by insisting upon it, giving a formula of prayer, and very often

praying himself. He prayed for his friends, and for his enemies too. He taught holiness, without which no one could see the Lord.

(10) Meekness and self-denial were prominent in the Saviour's teaching, as we learn from such passages as the following: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The following three great items of the gospel were clearly revealed in his teaching: The doctrine of the soul; the doctrine of God; and the doctrine of reconciliation between God and man.

Jesus taught much in his short life. Though all Jesus said that has been left on record, would make only a small tract, yet no uninspired person has ever been able to fully digest it. It certainly is "*multum in parvo.*"

Who has ever been able to measure the effect of Christ's teaching upon the world? Eternity alone can tell the story. That we may have some just conception of its influence, think of the effect his teaching has had, is having, and will have upon the family of men. We can form only a faint idea of the effects of Christianity upon the race by contrasting this country in every respect with heathen lands; and in imagination stand by the open tomb, and see the sainted dead, as they arise from the ashes of the grave and soar away to the fields of paradise to reign in bliss forever more.

## SERMON XII.

### THE TRANSFIGURATION.

MATTHEW XVII. 1-8; MARK IX. 2-8; LUKE IX .8-26.

Just about one week previous, the good confession had been elicited from Peter, the rock apostle. The foundation upon which Christ purposed building his church had been revealed. This period marked the high point of the apostles' faith before they reached the open grave. Never more did it seem to be so high until after the resurrection.

For a long while Mount Tabor was thought to be the honored spot where occurred the transfiguration—one of the most remarkable events known to sacred story. But strengthened scholarship and more critical research surrender the palm to snow-capped Hermon, which better meets the demands of Matthew's narrative where he says, "And brought them up into a high mountain apart." Hence it is most generally conceded now that this wonderful event transpired upon some lofty spur of Hermon, which was cooled by the refreshing breath from the fields of snow lying near his summit. "Brought up among the hills, such a region—with distant summits white in spots with snow, even in summer; its pure air; and the solitude of woody slopes and shady valleys—must have breathed an eternal calm and deep, peaceful joy, seldom felt amidst the abodes of men, on the wearied and troubled spirit of our Lord."



The time has come for Christ to ascend the lofty mountain. I imagine it is toward evening when he takes the three of his little band doubtless in closest sympathy with him and best prepared to receive, and for the time being hold, what they are soon to see and hear, and wends his way toward Hermon's wintry brow for silent prayer. It is again the favored three we find by his side—"the Sons of Thunder, and the Man of Rock." They were with him in the death-chamber at Jairus' house; they are with him now; and they are to be with him while passing through Gethsemane's shade and sorrow. Christ desires them to receive some words and scenes of cheer, preparing them for the humiliation which is in the near future. They finally reach the destined spot, the hallowed ground; and while Peter, James and John are overcome with fatigue and sleep, Jesus is holding holy communion with his Father in prayer. Just think of it—humanity sleeping, while divinity, coupled with humanity, burdened probably with the events of the near future, is lifting his great heart to God in prayer.

Speaking with due reverence, it may have been needful for Christ to pray, for the following reasons: First, to prepare himself for the transfiguration; second, to fit himself for his self-surrender to the shameful death of the cross. Being human as well as divine, clouds of sadness must have passed at times over his pure spirit, for the following considerations: "(1) In view of the accursed

tree of the cross. It is a horrible thought, for one so pure to die such an ignominious death—not for himself, but for others. (2) Though the *holy* one, he is to be made an offering for sin. Though innocent and spotless, he must die a shameful death between two malefactors. (3) He loved *all* men, and died for all; yet he died as an enemy. (4) While no one, friend or foe, has ever been able to point to one stain upon his record, yet he died as a blasphemer.”

The prayer continued while the disciples slept. Brethren, could you not have watched while he prayed? Doubtless it fatigued you to climb the mountain-side, but he was with you in the weary journey. Remember, it seems the grave under Abarim is opening; the horses and charioteers which carried away the prophet of Carmel are about to turn earthward again; the Father is harnessing his cloud for the eventful occasion. Wake up, wake up! behold and hear your Lord. Doubtless, “as he continued praying, his soul rose above all earthly sorrows. Drawn forth by the nearness of his heavenly Father, the divinity within showed through the veiling flesh, till his raiment kindled to the dazzling brightness of light, or of the glittering snow on the peaks above him, and his face glowed with a sunlike majesty. Amidst such an effulgence it was impossible the three could sleep. Roused by the splendor, they gazed, awestruck, at the wonder, when lo, two human forms, in glory like that of the angels, stood by his side—Moses and

Elijah, the founder and defender of the old dispensation, which He had come at once to supersede and to fulfil. Their presence from the upper world was a symbol that the law and prophets henceforth gave place to a higher dispensation; but they (probably) had also another mission. They had passed through death, or at least from life, and knew the triumph that lay beyond mortality to the faithful servants of God. Who could speak to him as they of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem, and temper the gloom of its anticipation? Their presence spoke of the grave conquered, and the eternal glory beyond."—*Geikie*.

We know not all they said; but, according to Luke, we do know they spoke of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Imagination only can conjecture what they said. Methinks in that eventful conversation they went as far back from the cross as Gethsemane. They stood in the garden; they spoke of its lonely shade, of the same three forgetful sleepers, and of its bloody sweat. They referred to the betrayer's kiss, to His trials in the different courts, to the groundless sentence, to the rustic crown, and the mock robe. Methinks they lingered longest at the cross and at the rock grave. In that wonderful interview, I imagine the bloody scene was dwelt upon, also the burial, and the triumphant resurrection from the sealed and borrowed tomb. But we can never know, while here, what they said, or how long they talked.

When we think of those who were there, and what must have been seen and heard, who can wonder that Peter was affrighted, and knew not what to say? Later, Peter expressed a desire to prolong the scene, and the stay of the heavenly visitors. Long after these transactions, they were fresh in the memory of the rock apostle, when he said: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (II. Pet. i. 16-18). Yes, as Peter suggests, the eternal Father lends his presence to the scene which may have been transpiring "above the clouds."

Behold! yonder comes the God of nations, with a bright cloud for his chariot, riding near the honored summit of Hermon. "Though a cloud, yet luminous; revealing, yet concealing, the Eternal Presence overshadowing them; and a voice from its glittering bosom said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'" The time was once when you were to hear Moses, the lawgiver of Israel; but, having disobeyed me at the waters of Meribah, he died upon the brow of Pisgah; and I sealed his tomb at the foot of Abarim. Then

Elijah came, the avenger of Carmel, as the great defender and restorer of the law; but a chariot of fire and horses of flame swooped down, and he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. But here is my Son, my only begotten Son, my delight—*hear him*. Listen to what Jesus says, do what he commands, be what he requires, and trust him for the promises couched in my immortal Word.

View that sacred convocation on Mount Hermon—that greatest assembly. Behold that assemblage considering the interest of time and eternity. It is composed of representatives of the past, present and future. These three periods, measuring all time, meet upon that sacred mountain. There the flesh, incarnation and divinity—there time, the intermediate state, if there be any, and heaven itself—blend in that luminous cloud. View that assembly again, and further consider the character of those composing it. There are Peter, James and John, doubtless the three favored friends of the Master. Peter, bold and impetuous, who, after the “*passion*,” three times confessed that he loved Jesus. Peter is the divine writer who treats largely upon duty. It is he who, in the following language, so beautifully tells us how to build Christian character: “And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith. virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity” (II. Pet. i. 5-7). There is James,

the only divine writer who gives a definition of religion, or speaks especially of its fruits—he whose heart seems to be burdened with the necessity of an obedient faith. He it is who contends that “faith without works is dead”; and argues that faith must embody or express itself in order to bring its blessing. The beloved apostle (John) is an important member of that favorite trio. He was the disciple Jesus especially loved—the one who frequently leaned upon his bosom; and doubtless the one most like him. A “Son of Thunder” he was called; but by association with Jesus, and under the transforming influence of the gospel, he was changed into the apostle of love. With love John tuned his lyre, which has been ringing through the centuries, its influence being to bring humanity into one holy brotherhood.

There stands Moses, the lawgiver from Horeb. It was Moses who wrestled with Pharaoh in the interest of Israel. He it was who led the children of Abraham to the Red Sea, stretched his potent rod across the waters, causing the billows to crouch at his feet; thus making a dry passage through the midst of the sea for the favored travelers. It was Moses who had his ears greeted with the gladsome song of deliverance, as they rose upon the other bank of the Red Sea. He it was who stood upon the smoking brow of Sinai, conversing with God, as friend converses with friend, weaving his garland of the lightning’s wing in sportive twist, while he received from the

hands of Jehovah the Ten Commandments for the guidance of Israel passing through the wilderness. It was the same Moses who ascended Pisgah; walked out upon its lofty brow; and, after viewing the landscape o'er, died, and was buried in the land of Moab, where man has never had the privilege of bowing down, and shedding one tear upon the dust which rests above his remains. But, thank the Lord, he is over Jordan, at home at last, by the side of the Saviour. In company with Moses is Elijah, the great prophet and defender of the law. They both come, as it were, to lay their commissions at the Saviour's feet. Both the law and the prophets are to fade away in the undimmed splendor of the cross.

Then, there is the Saviour, arrayed in his grandeur and glory—"his countenance as the sun, and his garments white as the dazzling snow-fields above them. He was enwrapped in such an aureole of glistening brilliance—his whole presence breathed so divine a radiance—that the light, the snow, the lightning are the only things to which the evangelist can compare that celestial luster." With a cloud for his throne, God is there to preside over that great assembly. There has never been such a convocation before or since, assembled upon the storm-swept shores of time.

"And when the disciples heard" God's voice from the cloud, "they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid." The disciples were so familiar with that

voice; so often had they heard from those precious lips that same expression of good cheer, "Be not afraid." From the foaming waves of the blue Galilee the same encouraging words were heard, with the added expression, "It is I." Yes, "be not afraid"—nothing will hurt you *here*. All *here* are your friends. I am here; so is also my Father. It is true, these are wonderful events; but I desire you to be prepared for the closing crisis, which is not far before us. I have taught you that my kingdom was not of this world; that I must die, and that we must stoop to rise—must die to live. I wanted you to see beyond death, to behold me as I will appear beyond the cross, in my Father's house. Ever remember death, to the Christian, is only the gateway to the elysian fields of bliss in my Father's presence. Tell not these things—the things ye have seen and heard—until after my resurrection. The time has not come to tell them; the world is not ready for them. I selected you three to accompany me on this journey, because you seemed to feel the deepest interest in me, were nearer ready to receive with profit the disclosures of the mountain, and would keep and often ponder them until I should arise from the grave.

The scene is now over, the cloud is gone, Moses and Elijah have departed; no one is here except us four. As you depart, do not dispute in reference to the resurrection, for you do not yet understand. The preachers in the synagogues have taught you many errors in regard to it.



You are not only confused as to who shall arise, but also as to the occasion and time of the resurrection. You also have wrong conceptions as to the coming of Elijah. The Elijah of Malachi has come already, but they knew him not. He preached repentance to the people, and warned them to flee from the coming wrath, but they, unworthy of him, and appreciating him not, took his life—the fate I am to meet in the near future. The disciples then understood that Christ had reference to John the Baptist.

“It was now morning, and the nine were awaiting the return of their Master and his friends. What the conversation was between Jesus and the three, as they descended from the mountain, is not told us. Once more there was freedom to speak, though doubtless they did so with a strange reverence, hardly venturing to talk of what they had seen and heard. Nor could they relieve their minds by telling the wonders to the others of the twelve; for even they were so little prepared for such disclosures, that Jesus commanded that the vision should be told to no man till the Son of man be risen from the dead.”—*Geikie*.

Not long after Christ returned from the mount of transfiguration, he passed away; not in a cloud of glory, but in the darkness of the cross; not between Moses and Elijah, but between two thieves.

In conclusion, consider some of the lessons learned from the Transfiguration:

(1) It is hard to remove preconceived ideas. It is much easier to sow the seed of the kingdom in the virgin soil of the heart than to remove false impressions, and then implant the truth. *Take heed how you hear, and what you hear.*

(2) Exaltation comes through humiliation. If we desire to reign, we must serve.

(3) Earth can get a mere glimpse of heaven. "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."

(4) The earthly can not understand the heavenly. This thought is further emphasized by the Saviour, in the following: "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?" (John iii. 12).

(5) The gospel is superior to the law and prophets.

(6) There is, as a rule, a right and a wrong time to tell what should be told. Things that should *never* be told are frequently told first.

(7) If you desire to see Christ in his glory, be in sympathy with him—live close to him.

(8) If you desire to know more of the past, present and future, death, the grave and judgment, stand upon the mountain peaks of the Bible.

(9) Let Jesus lead you, if you desire to feast upon heavenly manna, and to ever live in God's blissful presence.

(10) While praying, be as near God as possible.

## SERMON XIII.

### THE SONSHIP OF CHRIST.

MATTHEW XXII. 41-46.

In this connection Christ asked the Pharisees two far-reaching questions: "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he?" More profound or more important questions have never been propounded to the human race. These questions have been before the world, for solution, ages upon ages, and are applicable to all. In solving important queries of any kind, at least two things are necessary: (a) Knowledge; (b) investigation.

"What think ye of Christ?" How do you regard him? His life is before you. According to what you have seen, heard, and now know, what do you think about him? Who is he? Mark their answer, his reply, and their silence (xxii. 46). As knowledge is the first thing needful in the solution of problems, from whence comes the knowledge in solving spiritual questions like these? It must be from the Bible. These questions are certainly answered in the pure and bright light of close and critical Bible research. *We* were not eye-witnesses; but our knowledge of Jesus comes from those who were. There are three kinds of evidence; eye-witnesses, the testimony of eye-witnesses, and the individual. In the case of Jesus we have the last two kinds of evidence. Let us now weigh some of the evidence of Christ's divinity.

I. Harmony between prophecy and history is the first evidence to which you are cited. As this thought is right fully ventilated in the sermon "Christ in Prophecy and History," it is only necessary here to give it a passing notice. However, the perfect agreement between the predictions concerning Christ and the history of the principal events in his life indicates clearly that he is the God-man—the one of whom the seers and prophets spake and the Psalmist sang; "the one among ten thousand, and altogether lovely;" who was with the Father before "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

II. Another evidence of Christ's divinity is the Sermon on the Mount, delivered by a man only thirty years of age—not from theological seminary or college. "Jesus had no outer and inner circle, for public and secret doctrines, like the rabbis. . . . This sermon, which is the fullest statement we have of the nature of his kingdom, and the conditions and duties of its citizenship, was spoken under the open sky, to all who happened to form his audience. In the great declaration of the principles and laws of the Christian republic—a republic in the relations of its citizens to each other—a kingdom in their relation to Jesus—the omissions are no less striking than the demands. There is no reference to the priest or rabbi—till then the undisputed authorities in religion—nor is the rite of circumcision even mentioned, though it made the Jew a

member of the old covenant, as a mere theocratic form apart from moral requirements. It is not condemned, but is ignored. Till now, a vital condition of entrance into the kingdom of God, it is so no more. Nor are any other outward forms more in favor. The new kingdom is to be founded on righteousness and love, and contrasts with the old by its spiritual freedom, untrammelled by outward rules. It opposes to the nationality and limitation of the old theocracy a universal invitation, with no restriction except that of character and conduct."—*Geikie*.

The one sentence, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God," is sufficient to place its author beside any famous writer. After the research and experience of ages, the ripest and safest scholars and thinkers agree that blessed, or happy, are the pure in heart. Effort after effort has been made to obtain happiness. It has been sought in the martial robe on the field of battle, in the paths of wealth and luxury, in the wine-glass, in satisfying the thirst of ambition; but it is not found except in the pathway of a pure heart and obedient life. The Book of Ecclesiastes seems to have been written to answer the question how to be happy. Solomon sums up the answer in the following words: "Fear God, and keep his commandments." Virtually, the way to be happy is to be good. This perfectly harmonizes with the teaching of Jesus, "Blessed are the pure in heart." See the wisdom and goodness of the Father in placing happiness within the

reach of all. Had it been only the skilful and brave, the very wise, or the immensely rich, that should enjoy life, but few could do so; but, since it is the pure in life and character, all who will can reach that blissful state. Is it not remarkably strange so few seek happiness where alone it can be found? All admit the Bible directs the true way to the fountain of unalloyed bliss; yet when they go in search of it, the large majority pursue the opposite course.

It is not my purpose to dwell at length upon the contents of this sermon. Suffice it to say, no man has ever successfully called in question any principle taught therein. Though what the world would call an obscure young man—just from the carpenter's bench—he takes his position under the open sky, and presents laws and principles which set at naught rabbinical teaching. The influence of his teaching is to abolish forms and ceremonies; to “take the handwriting of ordinances out of the way, nailing it to the cross, and to establish a better covenant based upon better promises.” For ages this sermon has been the astonishment of skeptics and infidels, the admiration of all friends and lovers of the Bible. It is the world's masterpiece. It sounded the death-knell of Judaism, and is the resurrection trumpet of that pure and universal religion which emanated from the ruthless tree of the cross.

III. Christ's clear conception of God indicated that he had been living with the Father, and was intimate with

him. Men have different ideas of God. Some put too much stress on his justice—Calvin and his followers, for instance; and the Universalist places too much even upon his mercy and love. One will interpret God and his teaching in such a way as to send unborn infants to torment by an eternal decree; while another will ignore God's wrath and justice, and so magnify his love and mercy as to teach the universal salvation of the race, regardless of character and conduct. Men's conceptions of God have been advancing toward the divine ideal all the while, but have never reached it. Christ is the only one who has ever had a perfect conception of God. We have never attained unto it, and will never go beyond it. The average Christian needs much higher attainments in the moral sense. The Fatherhood of God is not yet clearly seen and felt. The brotherhood of man is not fully demonstrated. The question arises, Where did Christ receive his clear conception of God—from whence this perfect knowledge of the Father? The reply is found only in the confession, "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God." "He is the express image of the Father's glory." He is "the highway of holiness," leading to our Father's house.

IV. Christ's transcendent intellectual powers attest his divinity.

(1) Think of his knowledge of human nature. It is not a sealed book to him. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked

and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13). "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man."

"Know thyself—presume not God to scan;  
The proper study of mankind is man."

Jesus knows the Father, and is well acquainted with man. Knowing the Creator, of course he is conversant with the creature. As "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," to know it as Jesus does, to be acquainted with its good and evil intentions, to be familiar with all its ponderings and longings, it is certainly necessary to be clothed with divine power.

(2) His perfect knowledge of the Mosaic law showed he was either God or "God manifest in the flesh." The sacrifices of the law, its types and shadows, its rites and ceremonies, its dark sayings, its relation to the gospel, its bearing upon the new institution, were all fully understood by him who came not to destroy, but to fulfil. He seemed to perfectly understand the design of the law, and that "Moses permitted certain things in consequence of the hardness of their hearts."

(3) Before and during the personal reign of Christ, there existed different ideas relative to the nature of his kingdom. The Jews thought Christ's object was to restore the temporal kingdom to Israel. They were in subjection to the Romans, and were hopeful that Jesus had come to



lift the iron yoke of the Cæsars, and thus redeem Israel. But Jesus knew the nature of his kingdom—he knew it was not of this world. He knew it did not come with outward show and kingly splendor, but was within them; that his object was not to establish a kingdom by flooding lands with blood and tears, but by enthroning God and Christ in the hearts of men and women. He well knew the kingdom of God was “not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” He knew its connection with Jewish economy, and wherein it differed therefrom. He knew its superiority over the Mosaic law, its effect upon Judaism; and that it would finally be recognized as the civilizing and unifying influence of the human race. Such knowledge was clear evidence that he was more than human, and hence divine.

Objector: “His claims to divinity depend upon miracles, and miracles are impossible.” A miracle is such an event as indicates the presence and sanction of Deity. It can never be known that a miracle is impossible. To know this, would presuppose miraculous knowledge. To know a miracle is impossible; one must know everything now being done, that has been done, will be done, or can be done—if not, the very thing *not known* might be a miracle. If we came from a monkey, tadpole or protoplasm, *it* originated in miracle. Some think little enough of their forefathers to give them such humble origin. Reader, is that the highest conception you have of man’s origin? Man,

who has reason, which the poet says is "the sunlight of the soul"; imagination, by which he is enabled to wander through the vast domains of heaven and sip sweetness from each chiming star—tell me that man, with all his mental and moral possibilities, had such low origin? I believe it not. The only account of man's origin which is at all commensurate with his possibilities is the Mosaic account, which teaches he was made in the image of God. God would not make him in the image of the trees, flowers, stars, moon or sun; but said, I will make him like myself. I will put the sheep, oxen, all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air, in subjection to him. He shall be lord of creation; and I will be mindful of him. He is of so much importance, his interest shall *fill* my mind. What consistency is there in admitting that creation is a miracle, and then challenging other miracles that have been wrought in the universe? If there has ever been a sufficient force in the universe to work a miracle, who can truthfully say it has not always existed, does not now exist, and will not exist forever?

Miracles are Christ's security. Suppose I go to a bank to borrow five hundred dollars. The cashier says, "You are a stranger—I must have security." Likewise, we want proof or security that Jesus will raise us and our loved ones from the dead. We see Jesus, we approach him and say, "Blessed Master, as you know, this is a land of mortality. *Here* we have to give up our dear ones, and,

in fact, have to die ourselves. We hear you will raise us from the grave, and we believe it; but will you not give us further proof or security that you will? In hours of deep distress, when death leaves the heart weeping at the grave, the soul wants every assurance upon which to lean. Please give us security that you will raise us from the grave—that death to the Christian is only the gateway to a brighter and better land.” “Very well, Christian, I will,” says Jesus. “We will go to the house of the ruler of the synagogue. Jairus, did I not restore your daughter to life?” “Indeed you did.” “Please tell this Christian the circumstances.” “My daughter, my only daughter, was taken sick and died, when she was about twelve years of age. The Master came, went in where she was lying in the cold arms of death, and took her by the hand, saying, ‘Maid, arise;’ and she arose and walked; and he told us to give her something to eat. I know she died; and at the touch of his precious hand she awoke from the sleep of death.”

“Now,” says Christ to the Christian, “we will go to the widow of Nain, and hear her testimony relative to my raising her only son from the slumber of death. Widow, will you please tell how this son of yours was made alive?” “We were carrying his remains to the graveyard, when all at once I heard some one gently say, ‘Weep not.’ It was my blessed Jesus. He came to the bier and touched it. Those bearing the bier stood still; and he said, ‘Young

man, arise;’ and my beloved son arose and began to speak. He could see and hear, and the string of his tongue was loosed; and he began to talk and lisp his mother’s name—praise the Lord!”

Now Jesus says, “Let us last go to the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Sisters, relate to this Christian the account of Lazarus’ sickness, death and resurrection.” “Our brother was taken ill, lingered a short time, and died. He had been buried four days when the blessed One came. To the grave he went weeping. He ordered the stone rolled away, and then prayed; after which he said, ‘Lazarus, come forth;’ and forth from the grave he came in the shroud of death. Oh, what a comfort he has been to us since!” “Now, Christian, these are the proofs I give. These are my security that I will raise you from the sleep of ages. True, these are only examples of restoration; but the same power that can restore, can resurrect, and will do so.”

V. The life Jesus lived was a miracle.

(1) He never did or said anything for which he had to repent.

(2) He was free from worldly ambition, prejudice or sectarian narrowness.

(3) Never seemed to hesitate a moment in answering the most profound questions.

(4) Was without sin—“which of you convinceth me of sin?” In the earth-life of Jesus, we have a perfect

life—just such as was never lived before nor since the time of the Virgin Mary's son. His was a life above reproach, one which has withstood the attack of all enemies; and which to-day doubtless has more admirers than at any other period of the world's history. Hence I contend that such a life is a living miracle.

VI. Christ's resurrection is the last proof of his divinity to which I now invite your attention.

(1) In the Scriptures his resurrection is adumbrated in types and prophecies.

(2) By the Bible the event is stated and proved.

(a) Many testify they saw him after he arose. Paul states: "And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James: then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (I. Cor. xv. 5-8). Of the same church he asks the following questions: "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?" It is admitted by friend and foe of the Bible that Paul wrote First Corinthians.

(b) Christ's enemies admitted that he left the tomb, but claimed that his disciples stole him away while they slept. Ridiculous idea!—how could they know what took place while they were asleep? What court would accept such testimony? As it was death by the law for a Roman

soldier to go to sleep while on guard, why were not the sleepers executed for neglect of duty? What would the doubting, despairing disciples want with the body when their hopes were buried in the tomb with Jesus? Certainly the timorous disciples would have been afraid to visit a grave which was sealed and guarded by a strong Roman band—afraid to visit it for the purpose of stealing the body of him whom they thought was no more. Hence the enemies' testimony is strong in favor of a *risen* Lord.

(c) The angels give no uncertain sound as to the Saviour's *rising*. "And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments: and as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke xxiv. 4-7).

(d) His numerous appearances to other disciples after his resurrection are infallible proofs.

(1) To Mary Magdalene. "All hail!—fear not. Touch me not."

(2) To the women returning home. "Go tell my brethren that they go before me into Galilee; there shall they see me."

(3) To two disciples going to Emmaus.

(4) To ten apostles in the upper room. "Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost."

(5) To Thomas. "Reach hither thy finger," etc. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" ("Harmony of the Gospels").

The resurrection of Christ is the test problem. It is that event upon which everything hinges, and as such is confirmed by Paul in the following language: "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. . . . But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (I. Cor. xv. 14-18, 20).

## SERMON XIV.

### THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

*ship*

ROMANS VIII. 9.

It is of no little importance to know what the spirit of Christ is. If we do not know what it is, we can not tell whether we have it. If we do not have it, we are "none of his." How terrible the thought of not belonging to him. If we are not his, Christ will say to us, "Depart!"

We will now observe the spirit that possessed the Saviour. There are different manifestations of this spirit. Let us consider some of them which were prominent in his earth-life.

I. *Humility* was a manifestation of our blessed Redeemer's spirit.

1. Jesus lived a humble life. Every revealed word and act of his indicated it. No expression of haughtiness, no bearing of undue pride, is seen in his wonderful career. His life from the manger to the throne is one continued day of humility. In imagination I see him gently passing to and fro before the world associating with the offcast, humbly caring for the distressed, lifting the bowed head, binding up the broken-hearted, and teaching all that earth is only the training-place for the better land. Christ was of humble parentage, was born in humble circumstances, lived a humble life, associated with the humble and lowly,



was the leader of the common people, and died the shameful death of the cross.

2. Not only did Jesus live a humble life, but he taught humility. If any one lives a humble life, he is very certain to teach it; but he may teach it, and not live it. But Jesus both taught and lived an unassuming life—more a life of *deeds* than of words.

(a) At the same time that Jesus procured money from the fish's mouth to pay his and Peter's taxes, "came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 1-3). You will not even *enter* the kingdom unless you are humble. Neither race-line, prestige, wealth nor power secures admittance into the kingdom—Christ's kingdom; but the fruit of a meek and quiet spirit will. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

We must possess a childlike spirit in order to receive divine approval. The childlike spirit is humble, trustful and teachable. So many need to pray and strive for that spirit. It will keep them from thinking of themselves more highly than they ought to think. It will enable them to have that faith—that abiding trust—which will take no denial; which will stagger not at the promises of God in

unbelief, but will go forth in obedience to every command of Jesus. It is that teachable spirit which is consecrated to all truth. Remember that truth never contradicts truth. Never be afraid of truth, knowing that if we are made free by it we are free indeed.

(b) Christ washing the disciples' feet was an object-lesson in humility. (John xiii. 1-17.) Inquirer: "Do you believe in washing feet?" I certainly do, whenever, by so doing, you can teach the lesson Jesus taught—humility. The disciples, having wrong conceptions of Christ's reign, had quite likely been discussing as to who should be greatest in the new kingdom. To impress upon his followers an important lesson, "he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. . . . So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." This passage is too plain to need special comment.

Christ here teaches humility, and that the highest position in his kingdom will be awarded to the greatest servants.

I see no humility in announcing a year previous that on a certain Sunday (say, the second Sunday in next May) we will have "foot-washing," and, when the appointed time comes, have a thousand or more idle curiosity-seekers present to see the "saints" wash feet. It certainly never was a church ordinance; if so, it is strange the apostles and other divine teachers did not enjoin it upon the churches. It is mentioned only once by the apostles, and is then ranked with entertaining strangers, and bringing up children. (I. Tim. v. 9, 10.)

The writer knows of one instance in modern times in which foot-washing indicated a humble spirit. An aged pioneer preacher of the ancient faith was requested to perform the marriage ceremony for one of his nearest neighbor girls. She looked upon him very much as a father, and he regarded her very much as a child or grandchild. When the marriage was over, and the time had come for the aged pilgrim to retire for the night, she, entering the room in her wedding garments, claimed the privilege of bathing his feet. What a contrast!—youth and beauty, in gorgeous apparel, bathing the wrinkled feet of one nearly ready to lay down the armor that he might wear the crown.

Imagine Jesus washing the feet of Judas Iscariot! Whenever you have too high an opinion of yourself, or feel in any way puffed up, just think of our blessed Redeemer

washing the feet of Judas. That will certainly cause you to see yourself as God sees you. Unclean, unworthy I am; and if ever saved, it will be through the merits of Christ's atoning blood.

II. *Tenderness* was also a manifestation of Christ's spirit.

1. This statement is clearly demonstrated by his course toward the woman who washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her flowing tresses. (Luke vii. 36-50.) Reader, study the account; see how tenderly Jesus dealt with a penitent sinner. We should all learn a lesson here. Christ was always hard on sin, but tender with the sinner. In condemning sin, we do not always make the proper distinction between sin and the sinner. A man may be engaged in some nefarious business, like making whisky, selling it, etc. In condemning the traffic, be sure to make the legitimate distinction between the individual and his business.

2. Jesus said to another woman, "Go, and sin no more" (John viii. 1-11). What more could he say? and what more could she do than sin no more? He did not at all approve of her course. She had committed a great sin; but is there no relief? Is there no chance of forgiveness? Yes, cease your sins, turn from them, and do right. He had nothing but tender words for any who would repent, and "go on and serve the Lord." Frequently Christians are not as lenient toward the fallen as the Saviour was.

They treat them as though restoration was utterly impossible. Often the fallen women receive no encouragement from Christians, especially from some of the sisters. It matters not how penitent they are, or how hearty their confession of guilt, the unfortunate are frequently shunned—discouraged in every effort toward a better life. Mark the contrast between

THE PRODIGAL SON AND DAUGHTER.

When the roses of summer were budding and blooming,  
 And the yellow wheat bent 'neath its burden of gold,  
 The prodigal son came—world-weary and tattered—  
 To the home where his footsteps had echoed of old.  
 And they clung to his garments, with tears and caresses,  
 Till the cup of his welcome ran over with joy;  
 And the flowers of love and forgiveness were woven  
 In a blossoming crown for the prodigal boy.

When the icicles hung from the eaves and the branches,  
 And the winter winds moaned 'round the dwellings of men,  
 Forsaken and homeless, the prodigal daughter  
 Crept back to the home of her girlhood again.  
 But they turned her away, in the storm and the darkness,  
 To the icy-cold winds, with their chill, piercing breath;  
 And the pitiless curses that followed her footsteps  
 Were fierce as the tempest and cruel as death.

—*Ernest McGaffey.*

III. *Forgiveness* was a prominent trait in the Saviour's character.

1. He taught forgiveness.

(a) In that matchless sermon Jesus says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you" (Matt. v. 43, 44). It is so common for the

majority of church-members, even, to disregard the injunctions found in the last verse given. They not only disregard them, but go exactly contrary to them. Instead of loving their enemies, they hate them, and seem to think they have perfect right to do so. They curse those who curse them. They do evil to those who hate them; and, instead of praying for those laboring against their interest, they will talk about them, and delight in doing almost anything they can to injure them. Comparatively few live on the high plane suggested by the Sermon on the Mount—that sermon of all sermons.

(b) Peter asked the Master if he must forgive a penitent brother seven times. The Saviour's reply was, "Not only seven times, but seventy times seven." That is, an indefinite number of times, thus teaching there should be no such thing as brethren living at variance with each other. It is difficult for some of the very best persons to forgive an injury. We may sometimes think we can not forgive; but consider how Jesus was treated, yet *he* forgave. If we would be like him, we must manifest a forgiving spirit. In the following, he teaches unless we forgive, we will not be forgiven: "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

## 2. The Christ of God *lived a life of forgiveness.*

(a) Though Peter thrice denied him when friends were scarce and very much needed—yes, Peter, whom he saved

from the rolling waves—he forgave him. Christ was so tender with Peter. It is true, three times Jesus extorted from him the confession that he loved him, possibly because Peter denied him three times. But the message of the angel to the women was, “But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you” (Mark xvi. 7). Christ’s reference to Peter is so beautiful and touching. Peter is the only individual named by Jesus on this occasion. Tell Peter to come—I desire to see him. He seemed to have special business with Peter. I have often wondered what he wanted with him, and what he said to him. Methinks they must have had a private interview, while in Galilee. Christ may have told him of his struggle in the dying hour, of the sleep of three days in Joseph’s tomb, of his triumph over death, bringing “life and immortality to light through the gospel.” Think of it—the one that three times denied his Lord is now mentioned as a special one the Master desired to meet in Galilee. From this we infer Christ had freely forgiven Peter.

(b) Our Saviour would have gladly forgiven Judas, had he reformed. Listen to that sublime utterance on the cross, “Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!” They do not realize that they are crucifying humanity’s best friend. As they are doing it ignorantly, forgive them—“lay not this sin to their charge.” Oh, the forgiving heart of Jesus!

IV. His was an *obedient* spirit.

1. "I must be about my Father's business," or in my Father's house. Lord, help me to know and do my Father's bidding.

2. When John the Baptist refused to baptize him, his reply was, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He was anxious to do his Father's will. He had that spirit which prompted him to implicit *obedience*. Have we the same spirit? If not, can we claim to belong to Christ? This is a very serious consideration—who can hear it?

3. Another divine writer says, "Though he was a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb. v. 8). Paul says (Phil. ii. 8), "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Not only does his first recorded utterance breathe forth the spirit of obedience, but the dying groans which fell from his trembling lips echo the same sentiment.

V. *Love* was a leading characteristic of the Saviour's life.

1. Love was his main power. Though he was a being of remarkable humility, sympathy, tenderness, forgiveness and purity, yet love was the great engine of his warm heart. He lived in a perfect atmosphere of love. That is the magnet in his life, which is drawing the world to him; and has caused so many to willingly lay



down their lives for his cause—the cause of all causes.

2. He loved his friends. Certainly no one at all familiar with his life can doubt this. Notice how he cared for and instructed his disciples. He led them all the time like a gentle shepherd. He protected his followers from the “wolves,” quieted them amid the raging storm, supplied their necessities, and breathed upon them daily his heavenly benedictions. Were there nothing else in sacred story showing his great love for his friends, his tender association with Mary, Martha and Lazarus would suffice. His frequent abode with them, his patient instruction, and his weeping at the grave are enough to cause all to exclaim, “*Behold, how he loved*” them!

3. Jesus also loved his enemies. This is evident from what he said, his dealings with them through life, and his prayer for them while dying upon the cross. Before his coming, the idea was to love your friends and hate your enemies. That was high-water mark in the ethics of that age. But Christ’s teaching was to love your enemies, etc. (Matt. v. 38-45.)

VI. The spirit of *suffering for others* stands out boldly in the life of Jesus.

1. Think of his privations. Laying aside his royalty upon high, he clothed himself in the garb of humanity. He became so poor he had not even a vesture; earth refused him a resting-place for his precious head

while living, and he was buried in a borrowed tomb. He suffered all these privations—not for himself, but for *you* and for *me*.

2. Behold him in Gethsemane's garden, when his sweat was as great drops of blood, falling to the ground. It seems to me, if there was ever a time when angels wept, it must have been upon that occasion. I imagine it was a dark night. Dark clouds had stretched themselves upon the face of the silvery moon; here and there a lonely star was dimly seen, to remind the beholder that earth was not entirely forgotten by the Father of light and love. Yonder comes the Master with his favorite trio—Peter, James and John. "Sit ye here," says Jesus, "while I go and pray yonder." They stopped, he went a little farther, fell on his face, and prayed. Oh, that prayer! The disciples were sleepy; the burden was great; the cup was bitter; but drink it he would even to its dregs, if it was the Father's will. Methinks the clouds were making ready to shed their tears; the angels stood in great anxiety; the Father was sympathizing; while man, for whom all this was transpiring, stood unobservant and unmoved.

3. Then see Jesus on yonder cross. The trial is over, the sentence is past, the die is cast. Those hands which, at time's beginning, flung burning, moving, revolving spheres into the blue depths of immensity, have been nailed to the tree. Those feet, which trod the crested billows, have felt the ruthless spikes. That brow has its

crown of thorns, and that form its mock robe. The wicked rabble is near, while his disciples are standing afar off. The prayer for his enemies falls from his feverish lips, he bows his head upon his aching heart, saying, "It is finished!" and then the Son of man dies. Everything sympathizes: the universe throws out her crape upon the bosom of the vaulted skies; the veil of the temple is torn; the earth trembles as if in the chill of death; and the solid rocks are rent asunder—all, all in commotion because Christ is dead, and the world apparently forsaken.

VII. Christ had a *devout* and *innocent* spirit.

1. It seems at different times he spent the whole night in prayer. Not only was he devout in emergencies, but his was a *life* of prayer.

2. Other men of whom the world was not worthy had faults—Noah, Moses, David, Peter, Paul, etc.; but all ages have endorsed the verdict of Pilate, "I find no fault in him."

VIII. The Lord Jesus had a *missionary* spirit. He believed not only in home missions, but also in foreign. He did not die for the Jews only, but for the whole world. The light of the cross is to go to the "four corners of the earth," illuminating the dark places. The Jews were highly opinionated in themselves. For a long while being regarded as the especially favored people of God, they thought no one had a right to spiritual blessings and immunities but a descendant of Abraham. But Christ's ideas were world-wide, and his teaching universal

in its tendency. His idea was that God was no respecter of persons, but the message he came to bring was for the whole creation.

Be a missionary, then, in heart and life, or you have not the spirit of Christ, and are, hence, "none of his." Know no North, no South, no East, no West; but have your heart set on fire with the cause of missions. Otherwise, you have not the spirit of him who died for all men, and who said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Christ, the great Lawgiver, believed in and taught a world-wide religion. His convictions were deep as the sea, and firm as the rock-ribbed mountains of earth. He brought good tidings to the poor, and preached deliverance to those Satan had bound. His aim was not to destroy, but to save. His work was not destructive, but constructive.

IX. Jesus was resigned to his Father's will.

1. When his greatest trial was drawing near, the sentiment of his heart was, "Lord, thy will, and not mine, be done." "Thy will be done"—can *we* always say as much? When afflictions come which shake the frame, and storm-clouds arise which try the heart, can we patiently suffer and wait, and say, "Thy will be done"? When friends forsake, and foes oppress; when misfortunes and dire necessity lay their cold, bony hands upon us, are we enabled to say, "The will of the Lord be done"? When

father, mother, brother, sister, child, or even companion, is nearing the last river; when the boatman is there to take them over; when you see their cold, clammy feet placed in the bark which is to carry them to the far-away shore—can you then look heavenward, and press your aching heart, saying, “Lord, thy will be done”?

If we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his. We must bear one another’s burdens. We must be brave in our opposition to evil, and in our support of good. We must hate what Jesus hates, and love what he loves. We may contend for the faith with our words, give our goods to feed the poor and our bodies to be burned, but unless we are filled with his spirit, and controlled by it, we are but “sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”

Let us ever cultivate the sentiment of the poet who expresses himself as follows:

“I want to be more like Jesus,  
And follow him day by day;  
I want to be true and faithful,  
And every command obey.

CHORUS.

“More and more like Jesus  
I would ever be;  
More and more like Jesus,  
My Saviour who died for me.

“I want to be kind and gentle  
To those who are in distress;  
To comfort the broken hearted  
With sweet words of tenderness.

“I want to be meek and lowly,  
Like Jesus, our Friend and King;  
I want to be strong and earnest,  
And souls to the Saviour bring.

"I want to be pure and holy,  
As pure as the crystal snow;  
I want to love Jesus truly,  
For Jesus loves me, I know."

## SERMON XV.

### THE GREAT LEADER.

I. PETER II. 20-25.

In the various vocations of life, we need leaders. We need them in farming, medicine, merchandise, law; and when the country is threatened with war and bloodshed—when the white dove of quietude and prosperity is pluming her pinions for a more genial clime, and the olive branch of peace is withering and dying—we look for suitable men to lead us to success and victory. There are only a few leaders—most of us *follow*. Only a few, comparatively, do the thinking, working and paying for the rest of mankind.

Especially does man need a leader in Christianity. He can do without one better in anything else than in religion. To make a mistake in farming, merchandising, medicine, or even in war, is not at all so fatal as to go wrong in the Christian religion. We must have a leader in divine thought and action. Man's arm is too short and frail, and the way is too difficult for him to make a safe journey to the skies without a guide. Where in all the universe can a competent leader be found? We desire a perfect one, if possible; one who has always thought right, spoken right, and acted in harmony with the principles of **right and justice**; one who is well acquainted with the way, and knows how to sympathize with the frailties of human-

ity; one who will never forsake us, it matters not how terrific the storm, how dark the night, or how high the waves may rise around; one who will hold our hands, if we will permit him, until we reach the skies in peace; one who has never lost a victory when his soldiers did as he directed.

Let us see if such a leader can be found among the four chief religious reformers of the world, commencing with Martin Luther, the great religious thinker of the sixteenth century. He was a noble man. He was a man of courage—a man of convictions. He did a great work. For aught I know, he did as great a work as any man could have done in his time. He snatched the oracles of God from the hands of the Pope, and shed a flood of light upon the moral world. Luther released the Bible, which had been tied, like a felon to the post, for many ages. The main thought in his reformation was to take the word of God out of the hands of a favored few, and give the common people an open Bible. This was indeed a great work: eternity alone can tell the influence of this act upon the heart and life of the human race. While this is true, are you willing to take Luther as your leader in Christianity? Are you willing to put your hand in his and say, I will think as he thought, speak as he spoke, and act as he acted upon all occasions? Are you willing to wear his name, be governed by his creed, be a member of his church, and prove what you believe by what he said? *I am not.*



I am satisfied he did not always think, speak and act exactly right.

Now we will consider the claims of John Calvin as to leadership in divine thought and action. He was another great man. He was a ripe scholar and a profound thinker. He gave expression to many grand thoughts. He is the author of several learned works. Calvin set in motion quite a number of lucid thoughts, which have exercised a revolutionary influence over many hearts. The main thought, it seems, in his movement was the sovereignty of God. In his teaching he made prominent the thought that God is a universal sovereign; that "vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord." Although he was a man of prominence and power—"a man among men"—are you willing to follow Calvin? Are you willing to be a reflection of his thought and life? Is he humanity's leader? Will you walk in his footsteps all the way? Will you always think as he thought, go where he said, and do what he said? I am not willing to do so. While I say, "Peace to his ashes," imperfection was written upon his brow. He did not always do right. His life was not absolutely molded in the mold of love and rectitude. We pass Calvin by, feeling satisfied he is not worthy of being the guide of the human race from these low grounds of sorrow to glory and immortal renown.

The next in the honored quartette of reformers is John Wesley, who made his name immortal by reviving a re-

ligion of the heart. When he came upon the stage of action, the church was in a state of cold formalism, "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." The warm and spiritual worship of the people had been superseded by long robes, needless ceremonies, and long and heartless prayers. Wesley's endeavor was to be pronounced in favor of "pure and undefiled religion"; to lay stress upon the fact that Christianity commences in the heart. He would have the world understand the heart is the source of the good and evil of this life. He would remind us that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." Such was very needful teaching *then* as well as *now*. His was a very important work; but who will say that in Wesley we have found the proper one to lead humanity to the last great victory? He is not the one to follow to the deathless land. I am not willing to take his sayings formulated, as my guide and discipline—to wear his name, and to consider him my spiritual father.

We now come to the last great reformer. It was he who met the infidelity of the old and new world in the person of Robert Owen, and drove the lance of truth through his shield and breastplate, carrying the palm of victory for peace and righteousness from the bloodless field. He it was who met the champion of Catholicism in the person of Purcell; "and routed him and scouted him," and received not a scar upon the shield of faith that ever

protected him in his long, eventful career. Largely the combined errors of the sectarian world this immortal reformer met in the personality of N. L. Rice; and with the battering-ram of logic, and with the sword of the Spirit, he caused the walls of sectism to tremble, crash and crumble, and the ancient gospel to be glorified in many hearts. He was none other than Alexander Campbell, the sage of Bethany, who, to my mind, was the greatest man of modern times.

The main work in his reformation was to exalt Christ—to put him in his right place in the church, and in human thought—the result of which will be Christian union. When unity comes, it must be in Christ. If we are apart, the nearer we draw to him, the closer we will be together. Christ is the great spiritual magnet to draw Christendom into one holy brotherhood. Campbell's work was heavenly-born in its scope and influence. I regard his work as more important than those preceding him, if for no other reason than because he had the advantage of coming after them. Campbell stood upon the shoulders of Luther, Calvin and Wesley in reformatory work, hence he could see further than they could.

Though Campbell was a good man, and a scholar; and though he did a work which will largely mold human thought to the end of time—who is willing to take him as their leader in Christianity? Who is willing to say, I will think as he thought on all subjects and on all occasions,

will say what he said, do as he did, wear his name, prove what I believe by what he thought, and just be a "Campbellite" in heart, life, creed and name? I am not. I will take no man's word in Christianity any further than the Bible directs. The four reformers we pass by, saying, "Rest in peace;" none of you are worthy of leading the human race from nature up to nature's God. Your mission was a great one, but not to take humankind by the hand and lead it from earth's battlefields to the climes of "the unclouded day."

Leaving the pages of human thought written by human hands, where are recorded the lives, sayings and sermons of the reformers, we have only one resort—the Bible. If it does not reveal the proper one to conduct our fallen race into our Father's house, we may despair of ever finding him in the realm of thought, action and life. To the Bible, then, we turn as our last alternative in this important search. How will it do, says one, to take Abraham for the leader sought? For ages he has been denominated the "father of the faithful." Genesis is largely burdened with his history. It was Abraham who was called out of Ur of the Chaldees into a country with which he was not acquainted. He it was to whom God said, if you can number the glittering grains of sand upon the seashore, or the stars which stud the floor of God above, you can number your offspring; to whom God said, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." To Abraham

the message came communicating the intelligence that there would be born unto him the child of promise. It was he who was commanded to make an offering of the same child upon the summit of Moriah. I see him as he leaves Sarah's tent with the lad. Side by side, father and son wend their way to the destined spot. The mountain-top is reached, the altar built, the son bound and placed upon it, the knife is raised in the hand of Abraham; and while the blade is glittering in the sunbeams of heaven, his arm is stayed by the angel, who says, "Now I know that thou fearest God," etc. This was certainly the grandest example of faith known in Old Testament history. Probably some one says, *Abraham* should be our leader. Listen; are you willing to say, I believe he thought correctly, spoke advisedly, and acted properly upon all subjects and upon all occasions? Did he not make mistakes? There were certainly defects in his life. However, undoubtedly he was a very exemplary man in many respects. But can we do no better, as to Christian leadership? For the present, let us pass him by, and see what the future has in store for us in the way of a leader.

Passing by some distinguished characters, why not accept the leadership of Moses? He was God's selection to conduct the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. They followed him forty eventful years. Remember, it was one thing to bring *Israel* out of Egyptian bondage, and quite another to be the leader of the whole human race from

the bondage of *sin* into the light and liberty of God across the swelling flood. It is true, the Bible teaches that Moses was meeker than any other man; that he led the Jews from their taskmasters; that upon the banks of the Red Sea he stood and stretched his potent rod across the waters, at which the billows crouched at his feet, thus making a dry passage for Israel through the midst of the sea. It is true, his ears were greeted with the song of triumph as the people of God reached the farther shore. It is true, Moses stood upon the summit of the shaggy mountain—which was wrapped in light and resounded with the thundering of God's chariot wheels—and carried away in his arms the law, to regulate the conduct of the children of Abraham. But it is also true, Moses disobeyed God at the waters of Meribah, as we learn from consulting Numbers xx.

When the Israelites murmured against Moses for water, he asked the Lord what he should do in the premises. God said for him and Aaron to gather the people to the rock of Meribah, and speak to it; and the water would come forth from its flinty sides to supply their necessities. When the people were assembled, as God directed, instead of speaking to the rock, he smote it twice, and said unto them, "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?"—thus claiming some of the honor to himself which was due his Maker. God taught Moses that he should never be permitted to enjoy the blessing of the promised land, because he failed to sanctify Him in the eyes of

the children of Israel. When God's army was nearing Canaan, Moses left the tented camp at the foot of Pisgah, having been called by Jehovah to its distant summit. There he stood upon its lofty brow. There he viewed the Jordan, the palm trees, the distant plain; and there, just outside the land for which he had been laboring, longing and living forty years, he died because he was disobedient to the voice of God. We will not take Moses as our leader, for he might cause us to stumble at some Meribah; and thus we would be only permitted to view what we had lost. Then from Abraham and Moses we turn in despair, feeling well assured we can not find in the Old Testament the proper one to lead us in the great spiritual warfare.

To the New Testament we go, and continue our search for the great leader. According to the name they wear, their sayings and sermons, some have enlisted under the leadership of John the Baptist. He was a man sent from God. Of him the Saviour said: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Certainly he who was less than the least in the kingdom should not be selected as the leader in the great spiritual contest. He was only a voice in the wilderness. His was a preparatory work. John the Baptist was only the morning star, trembling upon the eastern horizon of Christian thought, heralding the near approach of a "better covenant, based upon better promises."

He is not God's selection to lead the family of man in the final contest against sin and Satan. I will not wear his name, nor preach his doctrine. We find not the object of our search in the person of any of the apostles. Great men they were, who had their tongues touched with inspiration's fire from off God's altar; but we pass them by, for the worthy mantle falls on the shoulders of another.

Only one who has ever pressed the sands of time is worthy of the task. That one I now have the pleasure of introducing to you. He has never lost a victory when the soldiers followed his directions. He is fully acquainted with the way, and is the great sympathizer of our fallen race. He is spotless and pure, free from worldly ambition, a stranger to prejudice; and never has to hesitate a moment in solving the most profound problems. He is none other than the sinless Son of God, the Christ of God, "the Lamb for sinners slain." Such a competent leader! Thank the Lord for thus honoring the race of mankind. Who will say Christ is not the proper one for us to follow? Is he not the best one? Does he not generally eclipse the claims of any who preceded or have followed him? It is best to think as nearly like he thought, speak as nearly like he spoke, and act as nearly like he acted as we can. I am willing, yea, anxious, to wear his name, to take his creed, to remain a humble member of his church—to be simply a Christian and a Christian simply. Right here I am reminded of three things strange to me:



First, it is marvelous that all do not follow Christ. Every accountable person is following either Christ or Satan. Why any one would prefer following Satan, the great enemy of man, to Christ, who is both the saint's and sinner's friend, is remarkably strange to me. To continue to walk in Satan's footsteps means death and ruin, while to ever walk with the Saviour means life, peace and joy evermore.

Second, it is strange indeed that some who claim to follow Jesus "follow him afar off." Their lives are so unworthy of what they profess. They live at a guilty distance from Christ. They are so cold and careless. Stand near him, lean against his great, warm heart, renew your covenant; and, with new determination and vigor, press toward the prize set before you.

Third, it is wonderfully strange that any one who ever followed Jesus would at any time forsake him. Forsake Christ, and follow Satan! Forsake a true, tried and trusty friend, and follow an inveterate foe! Forsake light, and follow darkness! Forsake the embodiment of all truth, and follow the "father of lies"! Forsake a Saviour, and follow a "murderer from the beginning"! Forsake life, and follow death! Forsake the way which leads to heaven, and take the broad, beaten road that leads to endless perdition! Oh, how can it be? Prodigal, cease your wanderings, and turn your wayward feet toward Christ, who will gladly take your hand again, and lead you to that land without a storm.

## SERMON XVI.

### FOOTPRINTS OF JESUS.

#### I. PETER II. 21.

Having found our great spiritual leader, Christ, and having introduced him to you, dear reader, we will now briefly examine his life, observe the way he went, and see if we are willing to walk in his footsteps.

First, we will survey the early life of Jesus. The Bible does not say much about it. Nearly all that is revealed of this part of his earthly existence is given by Luke. Hence his story is called the humane Gospel; or, more correctly speaking, Luke is the writer that unfolds more especially the human side of the Saviour. Though the sacred historian has dealt very sparingly with Christ's youth and childhood, yet from a remark here, and a statement there, and by reading between the lines, I am convinced that certain things were characteristic of him, even while young, to some of which your attention is now invited.

I. *Jesus Christ was full of life and activity.* I can not think of him as having been otherwise. The idea of his having been "slothful in business" is preposterous. Not one thing in his whole life do I remember that indicates he was indolent. To the young I would say, walk in his footprints so far as energy and perseverance are concerned. To succeed in life, you must be industrious. There is no

excellence without continued effort. Those who have blessed the world by their lives, who have risen to distinction, and have written their names on the tablet of immortal memory, have done so by the strong hand of endeavor. The current of life, like any other, is kept clear by moving. Then, move, young people. If it is to obtain an education, to till the soil, to succeed in a clerkship, to gain prominence at the bar, to win laurels in medicine, or to be useful as a preacher, be active. Remember, life is short; and what is done upon the stage of action must be accomplished in a few years at most.

II. *Christ was obedient to his parents.* At the age of twelve, he went with them to Jerusalem to attend the pass-over feast. At the close of the first day, on their return home, his parents missed him. "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them: but his mother-kept all these sayings in her heart" (Luke ii.

46-51). Christ was subject unto his parents—obedient unto them. Take him as your pattern in obedience to parents. Paul says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” As Paul teaches, it is right to obey our parents whenever it does not conflict with our obedience to God. Parental obedience is the first commandment in the Decalogue to which there is a promise attached. An adult who was noted for his disobedience to his parents in early life enters upon his work at a disadvantage. To the young I would say, be respectful to your parents—“be subject unto them.”

III. *Jesus never suffered his obedience to conflict with his duty to God*—neither should we. Should our parents at any time command us to do something contrary to the will of high Heaven, we are not obligated to do so; in fact, we can not do so and be true to God. Should parents command us to steal, we should say, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt not steal.’” To bear false witness in court, or anywhere else, say, “It is written, ‘Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.’” If parental instruction is to lie, we can say, “It is written that ‘all liars shall have part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.’” If to engage in the saloon business, say, “It is written, ‘Woe unto the man that puts the bottle to his neighbor’s lips.’” If the instruction is to be an extortioner, by asking too much for a horse, cow, land, goods, or asking too much interest on money, say, “The Bible teaches the extor-

tioner will spend eternity with the hypocrite, liar and all the wicked." If your parents request you to go to any place of wickedness, you say, "It is written, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil.'" In short, if there is at any time a conflict between what our parents say and what God says, always give God the preference. Sometimes parents are not willing for their children to obey the gospel, and thus become members of the one body; then the child should remember Christ said, "He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." If need be, we must forsake all to follow Jesus.

IV. *Christ selected a profession and followed it.* Not only does the Bible teach he was a carpenter's son, but in at least one place it teaches he was a carpenter. His was a humble calling; but I imagine Jesus prepared himself for its duties, and followed it until he was called to a higher work. To the young I would say, do not live an aimless life. Select some calling, and prepare yourself, as best you can, for its duties. If you decide to become a farmer, endeavor to be the best in your country. If your intention is to be a merchant, physician, lawyer, preacher, or it matters not which of the honorable professions you select, do your best to stand at the top, remembering you will not be crowded there. Take Jesus, then, as your example in energy, parental obedience, and in selecting a vocation for life. Though your calling may be humble, patiently and faithfully perform its duties until asked up higher.

The Bible says but little, if indeed anything, relative to the Saviour between the ages of twelve and thirty. Eighteen years of his earth-life the Bible passes by in silence. Why this, I do not know. This is best known to Him who is the fountain of all knowledge. What Jesus was doing those eighteen years, I know not. Reason would say, he spent the time in and around Nazareth, working at his chosen trade. When he reached the age of about thirty, his carpenter's tools were laid aside; he wended his way to the banks of the Jordan, and requested John the Baptist to baptize him. This is another important event in his varied career. Will you follow him in baptism? Jesus desired to be baptized; reader, do you desire the same? He went many miles in order to be baptized; would you do the same if need be? or do you, like some preachers, claim it is non-essential? According to the way some preachers teach and act, they would go several miles to avoid baptism, rather than go one to be baptized. Kind reader, will you, like Christ, go where there is *much* water, or do you, like some learned "divines" (?), claim there is "as much virtue in a drop as in a fountain"? Do you, like Jesus, desire to be baptized "to fulfil all righteousness," or because it is the door into some man-made institution? Will you take Christ as your leader in baptism? If so, do not say any more it is too troublesome to go to *much* water. Do not say, it is indecent to go *into* the water, when Jesus did it. Do not make slighty remarks about baptism, or the one who

submits to it; for, in doing so, you make light of what the Saviour did. As Christ was confessed to be God's beloved Son when he was baptized, so you will be acknowledged as his adopted child when you are baptized.

From Christ's baptism we see him led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Study the temptation as given by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Satan's object here is to break Christ's power and influence, and thus convince the world he is not worthy of being trusted. His intention is to storm the whole citadel of human nature with his wily shafts of temptation. Satan concentrates his power by consolidating the temptations of life into the following three: "The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." "The first temptation was to test Christ's power, and satisfy his needs. The second was to test the Father's love. The third was to win the world by unworthy means."

Let us follow Jesus in overcoming the temptations of life. Notice, his weapon was, "It is written." Do not hesitate, say "no;" quote at once, "It is written." Learn what is written, and ever be ready to use it upon the tempter when he comes. If he tempts you to have evil thoughts, say, "It is written, 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.'" God will bring into judgment every evil thing. If Satan tempts you to say wrong things, say, "It is written, 'Every idle word that men speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment; for by thy words thou

shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' ” If the wicked one entices you to think, say or do anything not in harmony with truth and rectitude, be able to use in reply a “thus it is written”; and you will vanquish the foe, and have your cheeks flushed with a sense of victory.

From Christ's temptation we pass into his life of public service. Christ prayed. If we desire to be like him, and walk after him, we, too, must pray. For whom did he pray? For his friends. We should pray for ours. In the prayer he offered just before his death, recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, he says, “Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.” Every one who is made a believer in Christ through the words of the apostles, to the end of time, has an interest in this prayer. We should pray for our friends—our neighbors and their children. Not only did Jesus pray for his friends, but for his foes as well. Dying upon the cross, he exclaimed, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.” For our enemies, then, we should pray. The very atmosphere by which we are surrounded should be made sweet and sacred by the hallowed influence of our daily petitions.

Leaving the altar of prayer, with Bible in hand we will still search for the footprints of our Captain and King. Through the telescope of faith we behold the pathway of humility, as it wends its way through the events of sacred



story. Here it is in Jerusalem—behold it yonder as it winds along the banks of the historic Jordan; see it in Nazareth and Capernaum arrayed in its beauty; view it in different parts of Palestine, sending its fragrance along the journey of human existence. As we scrutinize, beholding its beauty and loveliness, we observe that, all along, the pathway of humility is marked with the footprints of our heavenly Father's gifted Son. If we propose to follow him, we, too, must be humble—must be possessed of a meek and quiet spirit, knowing, if we have not the spirit of Christ, we are none of his. In reference to humility, we must follow where he leads, if we would make a safe journey to the great beyond. The footsteps of Jesus are not often found in palaces of the wicked rich, but around the humble cottage of the poor; also around the door of the wealthy who are willing to lend a helping hand in uplifting the human race.

Christ's was an unselfish life. He thought not so much on his own things as upon the things of others. His sayings, his sermons, his parables, his miracles, his privations, his sighs, his tears, his sufferings, all looked manward. His life was purely unselfish. I can not think of anything he ever said, did or advised that manifested the spirit of selfishness, which stands out so prominently in the transactions of men. How weak is human nature in this respect.

All have weaknesses, but not the same. In selfishness it seems *all* are weak. With so many it is self, self, self,

no one else but *self*. It is *self* in sickness and in health; at home and abroad; in money-making and in money-lending. It is *self* in everything, except looking after the moral and spiritual welfare of others. Then, it is the *other* man. It is the *other* man who is killing himself drinking. It is the *other* man who is living an immoral, profligate life. It is the *other* brother who is not living right, will not come to church, and that *I* can not fellowship, etc. Brother, can you not rise above these sordid, selfish and sinful ways? You must, if you intend to take Jesus as your exemplar. Selfishness is certainly one of the greatest sins of the human heart. Early in the history of the race, it found expression in the language of Cain, when he disclaimed being his "brother's keeper." Lord, help me see more clearly that I am my brother's keeper. Lift me out of the dark, slimy pool of selfishness; and help me to be more happy, better contented, and to feel a deeper interest in the needs of humanity.

Take Christ as your leader in self-sacrifice. He gave his earthly existence to the interest of our race. Everything he ever did or said—every tear he ever shed, every privation he ever endured, every sigh he ever heaved, every prayer he ever offered, and every groan that ever escaped his lips—was for you and for me.

Take Jesus as your pattern in missionary endeavor. He was a missionary indeed and in truth. He believed not *only* in home missions, but foreign missions as well.

He was not just simply interested in the salvation of the people of Jerusalem and Judea, but he died for the redemption of the whole world. Had he not believed in general evangelistic work, he certainly would not have died for every creature.

Let Christ be your leader in resignation—in everything. In short, with the assistance of the Bible, find the footprints of Jesus, and then place yours as near them as possible.

By the eye of faith, I see an aged Christian pilgrim, coming down the declivity of life's hill, with his form bending, his brow furrowed, his white locks streaming in the wind. Standing at the foot of the hill, with feet bathed in the water of the mysterious river, with his hand in the hand of the Saviour, he looks up into the great Leader's face, and says, "Blessed Jesus, glorious Redeemer, what is this?" And Christ says, "'It is I, be not afraid;' I will never forsake you. Hold my hand—I will carry you through." Jesus then leads him to where the water reaches his knees. Then the aged Christian, standing in the chilly stream, says. "Blessed Son of God, 'the resurrection and the life,' what is this—why this?" Christ says, "I am with you. I will lead you all the way, if you will hold my hand." Next, the aged pilgrim, with water to his waist, is swayed to and fro by the waves which rise and burst upon the bosom of that mystic sea. With hand pressed in hand, he again looks into the glowing face of the grave's first Conqueror, and says, "Babe of Bethlehem, friend of

sinner, victor of death, what is this? what means this? what is this that steals upon my brow?" Jesus responds, "I am still with you. In the sixth trouble I am with you, and when the seventh comes, I will not forsake you."

The gallant Leader carries him deeper, deeper, still deeper, until the water reaches his chin; and then with feet cold, hands cold—almost the entire body cold; with face pale, eyes glazed, and pulse almost gone, with muttering voice for the last time he exclaims, "Champion of Calvary, conquering King, what is this?" and as the waves rush in fury over his head, Jesus clasps him to his bosom, saying, "This is death, this is death." "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then, rising, by the grace of God, above the struggles of death, Christ leads this triumphant Christian to heaven, the elysian fields of bliss, where he meets and reigns with the blessed evermore. With robe made white in the blood of the Lamb, with palms of victory in his hands, a crown of glory upon his brow, and with voices tuned anew to the harmonies of God's love, he spends eternity with the throng of ransomed spirits from the trembling, bleeding and dying shores of time.

Take Christ as your leader, then. Though tempted and tried, he will carry you safely through, if you will hold his hand. He will never forsake you, if you will not forsake him.

## SERMON XVII.

### THE TRIAL AND CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.

History acquaints us with many prominent trials, but that of Jesus is the most noted in the annals of the world. There are many circumstances connected therewith which tend to give it prominence.

(1) The Jews that prosecuted were *then* a great nation.

(2) The Romans that sat in judgment were, at that time; the controlling nation of the earth. Cæsar's eagles were dancing in the sunlight of every nation. Rome was *then* the universal empire of the world.

(3) Pilate, the judge, was in many respects great.

(4) Christ, the prisoner, was indeed great in every respect. In this instance, the prisoner was far greater than the judge—greater every way—no comparison between him and the witnesses, judge or jury in any respect.

(5) The result of the trial was *very* great. Only eternity can tell how far-reaching is its influence upon the whole family of man. If any of us are saved, our salvation will be the result of this famous trial and the crucifixion.

From the best information we can gather, there were six examinations in this wonderful trial:

(1) Before Annas, as we ascertain by reading John xviii. 19-24. Relative to this, Canon Farrar says: "Even

the minions of Annas felt the false position of their master under the calm rebuke; they felt that by the transparent innocence of the youthful rabbi of Nazareth the hoary hypocrisy of the crafty Sadducee was abashed. 'Answerest thou the high priest so?' said one of them, with a burst of illegal insolence; and, unreprieved by this priestly violator of justice, he profaned with the first infamous blow the sacred face of Christ. Then first that face which, as the poet preacher says, 'the angels stare upon with wonder, as infants at a bright sunbeam,' was smitten by a contemptible slave. The insult was borne with noble meekness" (Farrar's "Life of Christ," pp. 405-6).

(2) The night session of a part of the Sanhedrim. (Matt. xxvi. 57-68; Mark xiv. 53-65.) Christ is now before Caiaphas, the high priest. "In his house took place the second private and irregular stage of the trial." (See Matt. xxvi. 59-68.) What vile treatment at the house of the authorities! How shocking the idea of the sinless One being blindfolded, as Luke informs us; being smitten with the palm of hands, buffeted, and spit upon by those who were Satan incarnate! None of these insults was borne for himself, but for you and for me. How wondrous, how amazing such love.

(3) A legal daylight session. (See Luke xxii. 66-71.)

(4) The first trial before Pilate. (Luke xxiii. 1-5.)

(5) Then before Herod. (Luke xxiii. 6-11.)

(6) Christ sent back to Pilate. (Luke xxiii. 13-26.)

This was a wonderful trial—a mock trial. Condemned, but guiltless. The judge repeatedly said he found “no fault in him”—no “evil hath he done.” The suborned witnesses were false, and disagreed in their testimony. The charges they preferred against him, if sustained, were trivial. According to their law, Christ had done nothing worthy of death. Pilate was courting favor and popularity. He had not the courage of his convictions. There are a great many Pilates now—out of the church, in the church—everywhere. Pilate catered to the wishes of the clamoring mob, by passing the death sentence, and by scourging Jesus. Oh, that scourge—it beggars description. Geikie attempts a description in the following words:

“Jesus was now seized by some of the soldiers standing near, and, after being stripped to the waist, was bound in a stooping posture, his hands behind his back, to a post or low pillar, near the tribunal. He was then beaten till the soldiers chose to stop, with knots of rope, or plaited leather thongs, armed at the ends with acorn-shaped drops of lead, or small, sharp-pointed bones. In many cases not only was the back of the person scourged cut open in all directions, but even the eyes, the face and the breast were torn and cut, and the teeth not seldom knocked out. . . . Under the fury of the countless stripes, the victims sometimes sank amidst screams, convulsive leaps, and distortions, into a senseless heap: sometimes died on the spot: sometimes were taken away an unrecognizable mass of bleeding flesh, to find

deliverance in death, from the inflammation and fever, sickness and shame. . . . What he must have endured is pictured to us by Eusebius in the epistle to the church in Smyrna. 'All around were horrified to see them [the martyrs],' says he, 'so torn with scourges that their very veins were laid bare, and the inner muscles and sinews, and even the very bowels, exposed.' The scourging over—Pilate, as his office required, standing by to hear any confession that might be made—Jesus was formally delivered over to a military officer with the authorization to see him crucified" ("Life of Christ," pp. 768-9).

The die is cast, the Rubicon must be crossed—Jesus Christ must die. What transpires now is enough to sicken the hardest heart. By Matthew it is told as follows: "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head" (xxvii. 27-30). O shame, where is thy blush? Such treatment as this, and what follows, received by any citizen would throw the whole country into consternation. Indignation meetings would be held; and the universal verdict would be, "We must have revenge at all hazards."



The time has come—the work must be done—the Nazarene must die. “Jesus is not, however, to die alone. Two more prisoners are brought to suffer with him; men convicted, not of mere insurrection, but of robbing, the special trouble of the land in these evil times, even till Jerusalem perished.” Three crosses were made. I imagine the Saviour’s is higher than the others, “being placed in bitter scorn in the midst.” See Jesus as he starts with the procession, bearing his cross. Enfeebled by the trials, persecutions and scourging, I imagine he faints beneath the burden. Simon of Cyrene, being compelled to take up the cross, bears it to the destined spot. As the multitude pursued their way, there followed Christ “a great company of people, and women, which also bewailed and lamented him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.” Weep not for the one who is bearing upon his bosom the sins of the world, but for this generation; for those who plaited that crown of thorns, and pressed it down upon my brow; for that thoughtless and ungrateful ruffian who spit in my face.

They come to Golgotha, “a skull”—not a hill, specially, but a place. Though there are many fancied ideas respecting the place, nothing is known relative to the site, except it was without the city gates. The multitude has assembled. The priests, rabbis, doctors, Pharisees, scribes. Sadducees, lawyers, gatekeepers. and many women—all

classes are there. The center of attraction is Jesus, the Son of God. There stands the Nazarene. His brow is lacerated by the thorns, his back is bleeding, his face has submitted to shame and spitting—no other such treatment found in all the annals of time. He must die the ignominious death of the cross—a mode of punishment “which has now, for fifteen hundred years, been abolished by the common pity and abhorrence of mankind.”

Christ refused the wine, doubtless medicated with some powerful opiate, which was usually given the condemned just before execution. “It was probably taken freely by the two malefactors, but, when they offered it to Jesus, he would not take it. The refusal was an act of sublimest heroism. The effect of the draught was to dull the nerves, to cloud the intellect, to provide an anæsthetic against some part, at least, of the lingering agonies of that dreadful death. But he, whom some modern skeptics have been base enough to accuse of feminine feebleness and cowardly despair, preferred rather to look death in the face—to meet the king of terrors without striving to deaden the force of one agonizing anticipation, or to still the throbbing of one lacerated nerve” (Farrar’s “Life of Christ,” p. 438).

To approximate a description of the crucifixion, the writer does not feel able. Excuse me, please; my brain is too shallow, my tongue too thick, my pen too feeble. But listen to extracts from the graphic pen of the author of “Ben Hur” regarding it: “The part of the infliction

most shocking, at least to the thought, was reached—the men were to be nailed to their crosses. When for that purpose the soldiers laid their hands upon the Nazarene first, a shudder ran through the great concourse; the most brutalized shrank with dread. Afterwards there were those who said the air suddenly chilled and made them shiver. The guard took the Nazarene's clothes from him; so he stood before the millions naked. The stripes of the scourging that he had received in the morning were still bloody upon his back, yet he was laid pitilessly down, and stretched upon the cross—first the arms upon the transverse beam; the spikes were sharp—a few blows, and they were driven through the tender palms; next, they drew the knees up until the soles of the feet rested flat upon the tree; then they placed one foot upon the other, and one spike fixed both of them fast. The dulled sound of the hammering was heard outside the guarded space; and such as could not hear, yet saw the hammer as it fell, shivered with fear. And withal not a groan or cry, or word of remonstrance, from the sufferer; nothing at which an enemy could laugh; nothing a lover could regret. . . .

“ The workmen put their hands to the cross, and carried it, burden and all, to the place of planting. At a word they dropped the tree in a hole, and the body of the Nazarene also dropped heavily, and hung by the bleeding hands. Still no cry of pain—only the exclamation, divinest of all recorded exclamations, ‘ Father, forgive them, for they

know not what they do.' The cross, reared now above all other objects, and standing singly out against the sky, was greeted with a burst of delight; and all who could see and read the writing upon the board over the Nazarene's head made haste to decipher it. Soon as read, the legend was adopted by them and communicated, and presently the whole mighty concourse was ringing the salutation from side to side, and repeating it with laughter and groans, 'King of the Jews! Hail, King of the Jews!' The pontiff, with a clearer idea of the import of the inscription, protested against it, but in vain. . . .

"The sun was rising rapidly to noon, the hills bared their brown breasts lovingly to it; the more distant mountains rejoiced in the purple with which it so regally dressed them. In the city, the temple, palaces, towers, pinnacles, and all points of beauty and prominence, seemed to lift themselves into the unrivaled brilliance, as if they knew the pride they were giving the many who from time to time turned to look at them. Suddenly a dimness began to fill the sky and cover the earth—at first no more than a scarce perceptible fading of the day; a twilight out of time; an evening gliding in upon the splendors of noon. But it deepened, and directly drew attention; whereat the noise of the shouting and laughter fell off, and men, doubting their senses, gazed at each other curiously: then they looked to the sun again; then at the mountains, getting farther away; at the sky and near landscape, sinking into

shadow; at the hill upon which the tragedy was enacting; and from all these they gazed at each other again, and turned pale, and held their peace. 'It is only a mist or passing cloud,' said one; 'it will brighten presently.' Others did not think so, but said, 'The spirits who live in the air—the prophets and saints—are at work in mercy, to themselves and nature. Truly as God lives, he who hangs yonder is the Son of God.' The dimness went on deepening into obscurity; and that into positive darkness, but without deterring the bolder spirits upon the knoll. One after another the thieves were raised on their crosses, and the crosses planted. The guard was then withdrawn, and the people set free closed in upon the height, and surged up it, like a converging wave. A man might take a look, when a newcomer would push him on, and take his place, to be in turn pushed on—and there were laughter and ribaldry and revilements, all for the Nazarene. 'Ha! ha! if thou be King of the Jews, save thyself,' a soldier shouted. 'Ay,' said a priest, 'if he will come down to us now, we will believe in him.' Others wagged their heads wisely, saying, 'He would destroy the temple, and rebuild it in three days, but can not save himself.' Others still, 'He called himself the Son of God; let us see if God will have him.'

“What all there is in prejudice no one has ever said. The Nazarene had never harmed the people; for the greater part of them had never seen him except in the hour of

calamity; yet—singular contrariety—they loaded him with their curses, and gave their sympathy to the thieves. The supernatural night, dropped thus from the heavens, caused thousands to be filled with fear. Some said, ‘It is the frown of God. What other dreadful things may happen, who can tell? We are afraid.’ . . . The Nazarene was imperfectly visible, appearing to them not more than a dark, suspending figure. They could hear him, however—hear him sighing, which showed an endurance or exhaustion greater than that of his fellow-sufferers; for they filled every lull in the noises with their groans and entreaties. The second hour after the suspension passed like the first. To the Nazarene they were hours of insult, provocation and slow dying. He spoke but once in the time. Some women came and knelt at the foot of his cross. Among them he recognized his mother with the beloved disciple. ‘Woman,’ he said, raising his voice, ‘behold thy son!’ And to the disciple, ‘Behold thy mother!’ The third hour came, and still the people surged round the hill, held to it by some strange attraction, with which, in all probability, the night in midday had much to do. They were more quiet than in the preceding hour; yet at intervals they could be heard off in the darkness shouting to each other, multitude calling to multitude. It was noticeable, also, that coming now to the Nazarene, they approached his cross in silence, took the look in silence, and so departed. This change extended even to the guard, who so shortly

before had cast lots for the clothes of the crucified; they stood with their officers a little apart, more watchful of the one convict than of the throngs coming and going. If he but breathed heavily, or tossed his head in a paroxysm of pain, they were instantly on the alert. Most marvelous of all, however, was the altered behavior of the high priest and his followers, the wise men who had assisted him in the trial in the night, and, in the victim's face, kept place by him with jealous approval. When the darkness began to fall they began to lose their confidence. There were among them many learned in astronomy, and familiar with the apparitions so terrible in those days to the masses. These closed together when the sun began to fade before their eyes, and the mountains and hills to recede; they drew together in a group around their pontiff and debated what they saw. 'The moon is at its full,' they said, with truth, 'and this can not be an eclipse.' Then, as no one could account for the darkness, in their secret hearts they associated it with the Nazarene, and yielded to an alarm which the long continuance of the phenomenon steadily increased. They noted every motion and word of the Nazarene, and hung with fear upon his sighs, and talked in whispers. The man might be the Messiah, and then—but they would wait and see. Some cast inquiring glances at the sun, as seeking the cause of the darkness. When the third hour was about half gone, some men of the rudest class—wretches from the tombs around the city

—came and stopped in front of the center cross. ‘This is he, the new King of the Jews,’ said one of them. The others cried, with laughter, ‘Hail, all hail, King of the Jews!’ Receiving no reply, they went closer. ‘If thou be the King of the Jews, or the Son of God, come down,’ they said loudly. At this, one of the thieves quit his groaning, and called to the Nazarene, ‘Yes, if thou be Christ, save thyself and us.’ The people laughed and applauded; then, while they were listening for a reply, the other felon was heard to say to the first one, ‘Dost thou not fear God? We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss.’ The bystanders were astonished; in the midst of the hush which ensued, the second spoke again, but this time to the Nazarene: ‘Lord,’ he said, ‘remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.’

“The people trembled at what they were doing. The pontiff, with all his pride, was afraid. A very little now would put them all to flight. The breathing of the Nazarene grew harder; his sighs became great gasps. Only three hours upon the cross, and he was dying. The intelligence was carried from man to man, until every one knew it; and then everything hushed; the breeze faltered and died; a stifling vapor loaded the air; heat was super-added to darkness; nor might any one, not knowing the fact, have thought that off the hill, out under the overhauling pall, there were three millions of people waiting awestruck at what should happen next—they were so still.



Then there went out through the gloom, over the heads of such as were on the hill within hearing of the dying man, a cry of despair, if not reproach: 'My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?'

"The voice startled all who heard it. With a sponge dipped into wine and water and put on the end of a stick, a man started toward the cross to moisten the tongue of the sufferer. 'Let him be!' the people in the way shouted angrily. 'Let him be!' Without minding them, he ran on, and put the sponge to the Nazarene's lips. Too late, too late! The face, bruised and blackened with blood and dust as it was, lighted nevertheless with a sudden glow, the eyes opened wide, and fixed upon some one visible to them alone in the far heavens; and there were content and relief, even triumph, in the shout the victim gave: 'It is finished! It is finished!' So a hero, dying in doing a great deed, celebrates his success with a last cheer. The light in the eyes went out; slowly the crowned head sank upon the laboring breast. They thought the struggle was over; but the fainting soul recollected itself, and those around him caught the other and last word, spoken in a low voice, as if to one listener close by: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' A tremor shook the tortured body; there was a scream of fiercest anguish, and the mission and earthly life were over.

"'It is over; he is dead!' In a space incredibly short the multitude was informed of the circumstance.

No one repeated it aloud; there was a murmur which spread from the knoll in every direction; a murmur that was little more than a whispering, 'He is dead! he is dead!' and that was all. The people had their wish: the Nazarene was dead; yet they stared at each other aghast. His blood was upon them. And while they stood staring at each other, the ground commenced to shake; each man took hold of his neighbor to support himself; in a twinkling the darkness disappeared, and the sun came out; and everybody, as with the same glance, beheld the crosses upon the hill all reeling drunken-like in the earthquake. They beheld all three of them; but the one in the center was arbitrary; it alone would be seen; and for that it seemed to extend itself upward, lift its burden, and swing it to and fro higher and higher in the blue of the sky. Every man among them who had jeered at the Nazarene; every one who had struck him; every one who had voted to crucify him; every one who had marched in the procession from the city; every one who had in his heart wished him dead, and they were as ten to one, felt that he was in some way singled out from the many, and that if he would live he must get away quickly as possible from that menace in the sky. They started to run; they ran with all their might; on horseback, and camels, and in chariots they ran, as well as on foot; but then, as if it were mad at them for what they had done, and had taken up the cause of the unoffending and friendless dead, the earthquake pursued them, and

tossed them about, and flung them down, and terrified them yet more by the horrible noise of great rocks grinding and rending beneath them. They beat their breasts, and shrieked with fear. His *blood* was upon them. The homebred and the sovereign, priest and layman, beggar, Sadducee, Pharisee, were all overtaken in the race, and tumbled about indiscriminately. If they called on the Lord, the outraged earth answered for him in fury, and dealt them all alike. It did not even know wherein the high priest was better than his guilty brethren; overtaking him, it tripped him up also, and smirched the fringing of his robe, and filled the golden bells with sand, and his mouth with dust. He and his people were alike in the one thing at least—the blood of the Nazarene was upon them all.

“About sunset, the body of Christ was taken down from the cross.”

## SERMON XVIII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

The crucifixion is past; the dark veil has been flung from the face of the sun; the earth has been rocked to sleep upon the bosom of Omnipotence; all nature is smiling with peace and promise again. The Sabbath has past, and as it “began to dawn toward the first day of the week,” Mary of Magdala, and other devoted women, came to the tomb to complete the embalming of the body which was hastily begun by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

As the “faint streak of dawn began to silver the darkness of that first great Easter day,” those devoted hearts which lingered longest at the cross were first to stand at the gaping grave. The question among the women, as they made their way through the “glimmering darkness,” was, Who for us will roll away the ponderous stone? It soon became evident that the two white-robed angels had terrified the keepers of the tomb, and rolled back the stone, while the earth, convulsed and heaving, delivered up its sacred treasure from the three days’ sleep of death. They saw the two heavenly messengers, who told them to go back, and tell the apostles—especially Peter—that Jesus had arisen from the grave, and would meet them in their own native Galilee. Immediately they went back, with excitement and delight, telling none but the disciples the thrilling

story; but even they received it as an idle tale. However, Peter and John no sooner heard the startling news than they ran to see the strange happening. John outstripped Peter, and first came to the tomb. But impetuous Peter came and entered the empty grave, regardless of ceremonial pollution. John followed him; and they both saw and believed, and heralded the story of an open tomb and a risen Saviour.

“The resurrection of Christ is the center of the ages. All that went before longed for it and pointed forward to it. All that has since transpired has been molded by it. Whether men deny it or confess it, they can not fail to realize that belief of it has transformed the world. The opening of Pandora’s box overwhelmed the world with sorrow, in the heathen myth; the opening of Christ’s sepulchre let loose upon the world a whole flight of birds of joy. To prove the resurrection is to establish Christianity; to disprove it is to destroy the whole system. If Jesus is dead to-day, he was an impostor; if risen, he is the Son of God” (Standard Bible Lessons, 1889, p. 140). Then, all depends upon the resurrection of Christ. Christianity stands or falls by it. If the church lives and prospers, it must stand upon the brink of an *open*, not a *closed*, grave.

I. The question, then, which now confronts us is, *Did Jesus arise from the tomb?* did death and hades yield up their prey? and did Christ burst the bars of the tomb, and come forth, clothed in immortality, with the keys of the grave swinging from his girdle?

1. All nature says the resurrection is possible and probable; for that idea is taught and practiced throughout her entire realm. Every blade of grass adding to the beauty of nature's green; every stalk of corn raising its head above the sod, waving its plumage in the breezes, pointing the farmer cheerfully to the harvest, is a witness in behalf of a resurrected life. Every field of waving grain inviting the reaper to thrust in his sickle; every flower blooming by the wayside, cheering the sick-room, decorating the new-made grave, or resting upon the fair maiden's bosom, is a child of the resurrection. The beautiful butterfly flitting from flower to flower, dipping its pinions in the balmy breezes of spring, reminds the thoughtful observer that it is only the fruits of a new life from the unsightly caterpillar which crawls in the dust. In fact, a resurrected life is taught upon every page of the book of nature. Hence, as Paul exclaimed to King Agrippa, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

2. The different recorded appearances of Christ, during the forty days he spent on earth after his resurrection, are strong testimonials in favor of the fact that he did arise.

(a) His first appearance seems to have been to Mary of Magdala, out of whom he had cast seven demons. Having carried the news back to the disciples, she returned to the open tomb. Seeing some one near, whom she supposed to be the gardener, she said, "Sir, if thou hast borne him

hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni: which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her" (John xx. 15-18).

(b) Her testimony is corroborated by the other members of the devoted little band of women, to whom he soon appeared, saying, "All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

(c) From Luke and Paul we learn that Christ appeared unto Peter. (Luke xxiv. 34; I. Cor. xv. 5.) The Bible does not reveal what words passed between them at this time. Methinks forgiveness and penitence met together, righteousness and peace kissed each other.

(d) I see two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Their heads are bowed, their hearts are sad, and their hope of Israel's redemption is buried. All at once a stranger joins them, and walks with them. Hearing their sad story, he "opened unto them the Scriptures, and caused their hearts to burn within them" while he expounded the law, unfolded the prophets, and opened their eyes, enabling them to

see that he was the Son of God—the one who had conquered death and the grave.

(*e*) “Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you” (John xx. 19).

(*f*) “And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you” (John xx. 26).

(*g*) Another appearance of the risen Saviour was to some of the apostles at the sea of Galilee. (John xxi. 1-24.)

(*h*) From I. Cor. xv. 3-8 we learn that he appeared unto James and Paul in addition to others therein mentioned.

(*i*) Not long before his departure, Christ met the eleven and more than five hundred brethren, to whom he gave the world-wide commission.

(*k*) The time of the ascension is drawing near. Nine times, at least, within the last forty days it seems he had been seen by human eyes. But his was not merely a human body, subject to natural laws. The time has come for his earthly presence to depart. His disciples assemble about him, he silences their anxiety relative to the restoration of the kingdom, breathes upon them his blessing, and by an



escort of angels, taking a cloud for his chariot, he returns to the bosom of the Father.

3. The Holy Spirit bears testimony in favor of Christ's resurrection. In from seven to ten days after his ascension, the Holy Spirit, having heard the Saviour's claims vindicated in the courts of heaven, flies to earth, enters the apostles, and says: "Ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain [him]: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts ii. 23, 24).

4. It was the testimony of the apostles that Christ arose, and became "the firstfruits of them that slept." To sustain the proposition, they suffered untold privations, and dedicated and consecrated the idea of the resurrection with their own blood. If Christ did not arise, the conduct of the apostles is as great a miracle as the resurrection. They certainly knew whether he arose. To know he did not, and then be maltreated, crucified, beheaded, rather than confess the truth, is to me about as miraculous as any recorded miracle.

5. From the first, the fact of Christ's resurrection was believed. It was not an afterthought of the later centuries. It seems the greatest examples of faith in Jesus are confined to the first ages of the Christian dispensation. "Within six weeks after the resurrection, that great event was the unshaken faith of every Christian."

6. The early growth of the church is a strong argument in favor of Christ's resurrection, especially when we consider the intense opposition, and the small beginning of the kingdom. "Its beginning was the lowest and feeblest possible; it was the seeming triumph of all the powers of darkness. The brief career of Jesus of Nazareth was ended. He has gained only a few disciples, and these are illiterate and unknown. He has not commanded a single soldier, but has seemed to despise all ordinary means of success. He is not known beyond the narrow bounds of Palestine. He leaves on record not a single sentence of poetry or philosophy. He is condemned by Jews and Gentiles. His disciples forsake him. . . . The persons who are to begin and carry forward this scheme of Christianity, who are to change this crushing defeat into victory, it would seem, are evidently inadequate to the task. They are few, disheartened and dispersed. One of them was a traitor and a suicide. Another disowned his Master, and denied him with an oath. There was rivalry among them, and a contest concerning who should be the greatest. All of them were ordinary peasants, illiterate, unacquainted with the world, and under the odium which rested upon the Jewish nation. What could these men do but, like the women, embalm the body of the dead Nazarene, and weep at his tomb? When they gathered for the last time about their Master, a broken band, poor, despised, and shivering in their timidity, how preposterous sounded the great commission, 'Go ye into all the world, and

preach the gospel to every creature.' . . . Yet the first announcement of the resurrection and coronation of the Messiah in Jerusalem, and but fifty days after the crucifixion, results in the conversion of three thousand souls. The next sermon increases the church to five thousand. A great company of the priests are obedient to the faith. Soon there are churches throughout Judea, Samaria and Galilee. Within thirty years after the beginning, multitudes of Christians were found in all parts of the Roman Empire" ("Divine Demonstration," pp. 207, 208, 211).

Such wonderful growth from small beginnings, in the midst of deadly hostilities, was either a miracle or the outgrowth of undying faith in Christ's resurrection.

## II. Effect of Christ's resurrection briefly considered.

1. If it be true that Jesus arose, our faith is not in vain, no, not in vain, but a blessed assurance. It rests upon the divinity of Christ, which is the bed-rock of the Christian religion. By divine faith we live three lives—past, present and future. By it we fling wide the gates of the past, ramble amid the hopes and fears, blood and tears, triumphs of faith and bleeding sacrifices; and then, turning our eyes toward the future with cheerful assurance, we see the ransomed of the Lord making their way to the pilgrim's rest.

2. God's children are saved from their past sins, and, if they remain faithful, have the assurance of finally reaching the deathless land.

3. Hence, the Christian should not be miserable. No others should be so happy here as God's faithful children. Their faith resting upon the resurrected Christ, their hope "reaching to that within the veil," they can smile through their tears, and say we know that in "our Father's house are many mansions" for those who live godly in Christ Jesus.

4. The resurrection of Christ answers the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Important question this. The answer is fraught with no little interest to mankind. It was nearly four thousand years after death was introduced into this world before this question was fully answered. Hints were given here and there. God took Enoch to himself at the age of three hundred and sixty-five years without his passing through the ordeal of death and the grave. Elijah rode to heaven in a chariot of fire, giving humanity an idea that there was an outlet from this to a spiritual existence. However, the answer was not fully given and understood until Christ broke down the walls of paradise, robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory.

5. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the salvation of Christianity. "Without the resurrection, the life of Jesus is an incoherence; with it, a beautiful and perfect unity. . . . The resurrection and its corollaries have changed the whole theory of life. Man was dying; he is deathless. With the resurrection, woman forever took her place by the

side of man in religious right, responsibility and activity. The story of Calvary is a disjointed fragment, a purposeless rhapsody, without the resurrection. Complemented by the resurrection, it is the epic of salvation, and its mystic volume of sound will make eternity vocal with melody. But now that Christ hath been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep, it forms the golden step to the throne of the universe for Jesus and his church" (Standard Bible Lessons).

6. Christ's resurrection harmonizes, as it were, every jar in the universe. Without it, life is a joke, and is not worth the living. Without it, death is an eternal sleep, the grave is an everlasting prison-house, and the church has gone fishing without any special bait. Without it, man is a failure, life has no meaning, Christianity is a myth, and the universe has no purpose. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming" (I. Cor. xv. 20-23).

These Bible thoughts cheer the dying Christian, and paint the rainbow of hope over the grave. We "need a hope that reaches beyond the veil." "He who says that this hope is not a deep and universal need, mocks the mother bending over her dead child, the strong man weeping at

the grave of buried love, and the aged husband and wife doomed to part in the dark valley of death. Nature does not meet this need. She rolls a great stone to the door of the sepulchre. The clay lips of the grave do not open to disclose what lies beyond" ("Divine Demonstration," p. 30). One who believes in the resurrection I see approaching the new-made grave. It may be a father, a mother, sister, brother, husband, wife, son or daughter that is sleeping in the tomb. The one whose remains lie beneath lived and died in the faith of a risen Saviour. Though the heart is steeped in sadness as it bends over the tomb, joy comes on apace when it remembers beyond the resurrection friends and relatives will meet never to sever, if they are only loyal to the conquering King. The resurrection draws earth and heaven near each other, and connects them with the cord of love.

## SERMON XIX.

### CHRIST THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

LUKE V. 27-32; MATTHEW IX. 10-13.

The wisdom of the Lord is manifest in revealing the plan of salvation from so many view-points. As all men do not follow the same calling, he uses different illustrations in explaining the scheme of redemption, thus adapting himself to the various vocations of life. In one place he draws his comparisons from things with which the farmer is familiar; in another, he speaks respecting the knowledge of the vine-grower; again, his illustrations revealing our duty are more fully appreciated by the lawyer; but in this connection we desire to consider Christianity from the standpoint of the physician. In examining this current of thought, the following concepts present themselves: (1) The disease; (2) the patient; (3) the physician; (4) the remedy.

I. We will in the first place call your attention to the disease, *sin*.

1. Sin is universal. It is almost as old as time itself; and wherever the human race exists, sin is found. It poisoned the fountain of life near the beginning, and the current of human existence has been tainted by its foul breath ever since. However, what we lost in Adam we gain in Christ. (I. Cor. xv. 22.) We are not responsible for

what we lost in Adam, nor do we deserve praise for what we gain in Christ.

2. It will not get well of itself. Many diseases will, but *sin must have a remedy*.

3. Man's remedies are not sufficient. Though mankind has done many things of which we can justly be proud; though man has struck the earth with knowledge, experience and forethought, and caused her to give forth her rich and varied productions; though he has spread fertility over the barren landscape, and caused choicest fruits and flowers to spring up and flourish in the desert abode of thorns and briars; though, by his magic touch, earth, sea and sky have laid their treasures at his feet—yet the remedies of the most gifted men can never blot out one sin.

4. The longer the disease lasts, the worse it becomes. As the river widens and deepens, and becomes more forceful as it nears the sea, so, as long as sin is encouraged to reign in the heart, it widens and deepens its fangs, and is more difficult to drive from its moorings.

5. It is certain to prove fatal if not arrested. Many diseases may cling to you a lifetime, yet not kill. Not thus with sin. There is nothing more certain than that sin will slay its victim by and by. It knows no surrender. It will not cease its ravages until the remedy is applied.

6. Like consumption, it is a lingering, flattering, deceptive, destructive disease. Frequently, when the patient thinks he is getting better, he is growing worse.



7. It is an epidemic—a contagion. It is able to destroy both body and soul.

From these characteristics we conclude sin is a terrible disease. If such be true, the question may arise, Why did not God make man so he could not sin? As it is sometimes common to answer questions by asking others, let me ask a few. Why did he not make fire so it would not burn us? Water, so it would not drown us? Why did he not make our teeth so they would not ache? Speaking reverently, God could not have made man without its being possible for him to sin. To be man, he must have the power of choice; and to have that power made it possible for him to do right or wrong. Destroy man's volition, or will, and you will rob him of the quintessence of manhood.

Some claim, stoutly, that God foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. If so, he foreordained that man should sin, and then punished him for doing so. See the predicament in which this places man. Consider the case of Adam and Eve. There they stood in the garden, midway between God's unchangeable decree and his known law. The immutable decree says they must eat (for that is what came to pass); and the law says, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The law they must break, for no one can change a decree that can not be changed. Of course they break the law, for that is what the decree has forced them to do; and then God punishes them for

doing what they could not possibly avoid. Is that your idea of God? Do you worship such a God as that? *I do not.* My God does not place a man in a trap, making it impossible for him to escape, and then punish him because he can not get out. My idea of the matter is, that in the beginning God placed good and evil before man, giving him the privilege of doing right and being saved, or doing wrong and being lost. Reader, that is your privilege now. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Your salvation is in your own hands in a very important and vital respect. I am so glad it is. I am thankful no one is absolutely responsible for the salvation of another. "Choose you this day whom you will serve." The wealth of the universe and the bliss of eternity depend upon the choice.

II. It behooves us to consider the *patient* in the course of this investigation. It is the *sick* man that needs the physician. He needs him *when* he is sick. The excuses sinners render for not obeying the gospel would be considered ridiculous coming from the sick man. A common excuse with the sinner, "I am not good enough to become a Christian—I am not *fitten*." As Sam Jones says, "Are you not *fitten* to get *fitten*?" A similar excuse of the sick for not taking the medicine would be, "I am too sick—wait until I get well enough; and then I will take it." I imagine the physician would say, "I know you are sick, and that is the reason I wish you to take the medicine, and

take it while you are sick." My friend, if you are a sinner, and realize you are such, you should apply to the great Physician of souls. The Bible says he came "not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Another flimsy excuse is, "I would become a Christian, but I am fearful I will not hold out." This is very much like the sick man saying, "I would take the medicine, but I am fearful I would get sick again sometime." Of course, every one that enters the church should be fearful enough to make him very watchful as to his course and conduct.

The patient, or sinner, must have faith in the great Physician. In temporal sickness, if the patient desires to add to or take from the prescription, it shows a lack of faith in the physician, and a lack of confidence in the prescription. The very same is true relative to the sickness of the soul. If the unconverted wish to add to or take from the conditions of pardon, it manifests a lack of faith in Christ and a lack of confidence in the power of the gospel. Furthermore, it is dangerous to add to or take from the prescription. "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19). Then we should take

the prescription as Jesus left it, neither adding thereto nor deducting therefrom.

III. All admit there should be a remedy for sin. It is furthermore conceded that man's remedies are insufficient. God sent prophets, priests and kings—they were all rejected. With lightning harnessed to a bright cloud, he came himself to earth with a message for man; but sinners heeded him not. He sent John the Baptist, as a voice in the wilderness, urging repentance and condemning sin in high places; but his message was largely disregarded. Finally, he sent his only begotten Son—the great Physician, whose claims we will now examine. For a physician to succeed, he must have the necessary credentials. What kind of a physician do we need?

1. One who is acquainted with man. "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man" (John ii. 24, 25). So far as a knowledge of human nature is concerned, Christ certainly meets the demands of the case. He is the only one that ever came and lived with man who was able to unseal the book of human nature and reveal its secret thoughts and motives.

2. He should be thoroughly acquainted with sin, the disease. Certainly he who delivered the Sermon on the Mount must have been familiar with the source and influence of sin. In that sermon, especially, we learn that

sin originates in the heart; that its source is not in actions, but in the thoughts and intentions. Had not Christ been acquainted with the origin, nature and effect of sin, it does not seem that he would have been willing to make such a sacrifice for its cure; and his sermons and sayings would, doubtless, not have been so heavily tinged with warnings against it.

3. The Physician of souls should be acquainted with God. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). "Jesus answered, If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God; yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying" (John viii. 54, 55).

4. He should be a Physician of power. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." That being true, go and tell the nations what is the soul's prescription, to relieve it from the thralldom of sin. (See Matt. xxviii. 18-20.) As all power was given unto Jesus, he is fully capacitated, as to ability, to be the Healer of the soul.

5. He must be a Physician of love and sympathy. These traits were characteristic of the Saviour. He loved

both saint and sinner, friend and foe, and rejoiced with those that did rejoice, and wept with those that wept. So far as I can see, in every respect he met the demands of humanity.

The Physician, Christ Jesus the Lord, having been selected, the disease, sin, must be diagnosed. Like the skilful physician in temporal sickness, we must diagnose the case, ascertain the prominent symptoms or characteristics of sin, and treat the disease in keeping with its leading symptoms. I will now call your attention to three characteristics of sin, which will be sufficient for our purpose:

(a) The love of sin; (b) the practice of sin; (c) the state of sin.

For *sin* to be destroyed, these symptoms must be destroyed. If there is not something in the remedy or prescription to destroy these characteristics, it must be defective. Not only must they be destroyed, but in the order indicated; viz.: love, practice and state of sin. Of course, then, the love of sin must be destroyed first; for no one will cease to practice sin while he loves it more than right living. What destroys the love of sin? Faith. Faith purifies the heart (Acts xv. 9), and a purified heart does not love sin rather than righteousness. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. v. 6). The believers on Pentecost did not prefer sin to right-doing when they cried out to know what they must do. It was their faith

in Christ that destroyed their love of sin—that made them anxious to turn away from their sins, and accept the overtures of mercy.

Repentance destroys the practice of sin. Repentance implies turning from sin; and when one does that, he ceases to practice it. I do not mean to say he will never sin any more, but when he repents, his mind is fully made up to quit a life of sin—to let sinning, from that time forward, be the exception, not the rule.

Now, what destroys the state of sin? The sinner must not only cease to love and practice sin, but must be translated out of its dominion. His condition must be changed from a sinful state to one of justification and peace. I presume all are willing to concede that every accountable being is either in Christ or out of Christ. If out of Christ, his condition is different from what it would be if he were in him. This being granted, that which puts us into Christ is that which changes our state. Then, the question as to what changes our state is answered when we learn how we get into Christ. This is revealed by Paul. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. vi. 3). Also in Gal. iii. 27, the same thought is expressed, “For as many of us as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” According to Paul’s teaching, by baptism we are conducted into Christ; hence it is baptism that changes the state or relationship.

Baptism counts for nothing unless preceded by faith and repentance, which destroy the love and practice of sin. This is in harmony with the teaching of the great Commission. Faith, repentance and baptism are the conditions of the Commission, which destroy the love, practice and state of sin. Therefore, the remedy meets the demands of sin, the disease. Then, by taking the remedy, or believing and obeying the gospel, we receive forgiveness of sins.

Christ has never lost a patient who carefully followed the prescription; that is, who from the heart believed and obeyed the gospel and continued to live a faithful Christian life. When our loved ones are passing away, we feel we would give the world if we could just call to the bedside some physician who could stay the hand of death, and restore our darlings to health. But no, we have to give them up; they can not stay longer with us. The best earthly physicians lose their patients, sometimes. The directions may be followed to the very letter, but death claims his victim, and it must go. Not thus with Christ. He loses none who will do as he says. Lord, help us to follow the directions of the great Physician, that we may finally reach the Glory Land, which is free from sin, sorrow, sickness and death.



## SERMON XX.

### JESUS THE GREAT PROPHET AND PRIEST.

My text on the great Prophet is Matt. xxi. 11, which reads as follows: "And the multitudes said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." This answers the question, "Who is this?" asked by the people of Jerusalem just after Christ's triumphant entry. Jesus is on the beast; garments and branches of trees are spread in the way; hosannas from the multitude are rending the air. "And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?" The text is the reply of the multitude to the inhabitants of the city.

In the most comprehensive sense, a prophet is a fore-teller of events, and a teacher. Christ was both. He is called a prophet by Moses in Deut. xviii. 18-20. That this refers to Christ is evident from Acts iii. 20-23. In the Bible we have the names of many prophets, but Christ Jesus is the greatest. Prophecies uttered by Christ: The heavens to be opened (John i. 51); his departure (Luke xvii. 22; John vii. 33; viii. 21; xiii. 33; xvi. 16); defection of his disciples (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark xiv. 27; John xvi. 32); Peter's denial (Matt. xxvi. 34; Luke xxii. 34); Peter's martyrdom (John xxi. 18, 19); his own suffering (Matt. xvii. 22; Luke ix. 44; xiii. 32; xvii. 25); arrangements for the supper (Mark xiv. 13); his crucifixion (Matt. xx.

17; xxvi. 1; John xvi. 32); his burial (Matt. xii. 39; John xii. 7); his resurrection (Matt. xxvi. 32; John ii. 19); stability of the gospel (Matt. xxiv. 34; xxvi. 13; Mark xiii. 31; xiv. 8); success of the gospel (Mark xiii. 10; xvi. 17); false Christs (Matt. xxiv. 4, 23; Mark xiii. 5); destruction of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiv.; Mark xiii.; Luke xix. 41-44).—Taken from Bible Text-book.

Reader, take time to examine these references; and doubtless your knowledge of the Bible and other histories will enable you to know these prophecies have been minutely fulfilled, and hence will confirm the statement in your mind that Jesus is the greatest prophet. Then, he possessed in a great degree that power which enabled him to raise the veil from the brow of the future, and truthfully tell of coming events. His prophetic utterances stemmed the very tide of human events. He stood with a few unlettered disciples around him, with the main influence against him, and predicted that what he taught would be published to all the nations of the earth; that crowns and kingdoms would tremble under the influence of the gospel, empires bow before its sway, and that all nations would finally acknowledge him both Lord and Christ.

He was better capacitated than any other prophet to unlock the door of the future; to know the thoughts and desires of men and to see the transactions of men and nations, which would cause the very earth to tremble and totter. He could see empires rise in their glory to-day, to-

morrow crumble and fall, leaving in their wake the blood-stained footprints of their bravest sons, and the tears of their fairest and dearest daughters. He had the power, it seems, of sweeping the entire stream of time, peering into eternity past and eternity future. Standing upon the narrow platform of the present, turning toward the inexorable past, he could see the death and carnage of the long ago, and hear the footfalls of enraged nations as they met on fields of battle in bloody combat. Then, turning toward the future, he could, by prophetic power, pass through the shades of Gethsemane, hear groans from the cross, see the blood-stained brow upon Calvary. He could see Jerusalem, with her temples and towers, consumed by the withering flames, some of which, according to Josephus, were quenched by the stream of human blood flowing down Zion's hill.

Let us now briefly consider the claims of Christ as a teacher. That he is earth's greatest teacher is readily admitted. When he made his advent, the world was in great need of an instructor—not so much of science as of redemption. For hundreds of years there had been no special teaching upon this subject; and even when there was, it was only in types, shadows and prophecies. The Gentiles were in worse than Egyptian darkness, and the Jews had lost their mooring. They had largely forgotten the loyalty of their forefathers. They were paying "tithes of mint and anise and cummin," but were omitting "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith." A new chapter in the

history of the race is opening. The time has rolled around for nobler deeds; the fulness of time has come. Jesus of Nazareth steps forth under the open sky, and speaks as never man spoke. He speaks with authority and love.

Jesus taught by both declaration and illustration. The main principles of his kingdom are presented not only in the declarative form, but illustration after illustration is given in the form of allegories, parables and problems. He does not only declare there is power in God's word, but illustrates the fact in the parable of the sower. He does not only say, "Watch ye," but exemplifies the same thought in the parable of the ten virgins. Not only does he exhort to a life of faithfulness, but emphasizes the same idea in the parable of the talents. He not only says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," but the same lesson is given to Nicodemus in a figure or proverb, when he teaches if a man is born of water and the Spirit he shall enter the kingdom of God. Thus, by both declaration and illustration he unfolds the nature of his kingdom.

He practiced what he taught. It is one thing to *say*, and quite another to *do*. Many **are** much better at *saying* than at *doing*. Christ always told the truth, and never failed to live the same. His advice was ever good, and he never failed to live in keeping with what he advised. It has been suggested that some persons **are** like milestones: they tell us how to go, but do not go themselves. The *theory* of some men is much better than their *practice*. "Thou there-

fore that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest that a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" (Rom. ii. 21-23).

The qualifications of a teacher should depend upon what you want taught. If it be law, science or medicine, different qualifications are necessary; still different if the lesson be redemption. The teacher must understand the dispositions and weaknesses of the students; and, furthermore, he must understand the principles to be taught. The great Teacher understands the weaknesses of humanity and the Plan of Salvation. To understand the former indicates he was a man among men. To understand the latter shows he had been with the Father and learned the plan, or was a being of superior power. He had the advantage of both. Jesus alone knows and reveals God. (Matt. xi. 27; John iii. 2.) There are at least four questions to answer in solving the problem of redemption:

(a) What is sin? I. John iii. 4; Rom. xiv. 23; I. John v. 17 and James iv. 17 give the correct answer.

(b) What is the remedy? (Answer, I. John i. 7.) We reach that blood by complying with the conditions of the great Commission. (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 45-47.)

(c) Is the soul immortal?

(d) What is eternal life? (John xvii. 3.)

Jesus declared his doctrine to be that of the Father. He was faithful to his trust. God commands us to hear him, and will severely punish us if we do not. Have you learned of Christ? and are you willing to obey him?

The idea of Christ's priesthood is brought out in the following language: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. iv. 14-16). Then Jesus Christ is not only a Prophet, but a Priest—the great High Priest—an Advocate, Intercessor, the influential Friend in the courts of glory. He is the Mediator—middle man—standing between our Father and his erring children, with one hand, as it were, upon the wayward child, the other upon the throne of God, pleading for the stumbling Christian who is sorry for his sins and determined to turn from them.

God appointed Jesus to the priesthood, as we learn from the following: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; who was faithful to

him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house" (Heb. iii. 1, 2). He was also called of God to be a high priest; for the writer of Hebrews says, "And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee" (Heb. v. 4, 5).

From the following passages it is evident that Christ was made a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. (Ps. cx. 4; Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 15, 17.) His priesthood is superior to that of Aaron and other Levitical priests. (Heb. vii. 11, 16, 22; viii. 1, 2, 6.) He was consecrated with an oath. (Heb. vii. 20, 21.) His is an unchangeable priesthood, as we learn from Heb. vii. 23, 28. He is now a priest, has been for more than eighteen hundred years, and will be until redemption's work on earth is done. As we learn from Heb. vii. 26, 28, from his entire earth-life, and from the general tenor of the Bible, he was of unblemished purity. He needed no sacrifice for himself, as we learn by consulting Heb. vii. 27.

What would we be without a sacrifice? Without shedding of blood there is no remission. Poor me, poor race, had there been no Lamb for sinners slain! Jesus, the great sin-atonement sacrifice, is superior to all others. (Heb. ix. 13, 14, 23.) All the beasts on Jewish altars slain are only a faint type of the Lamb of God, who came

to take away the sin of those who would believe and obey him.

He offered sacrifice but once. (Heb. vii. 27.) Under the old dispensation there was an annual sacrifice. Sins, it seems, were not really forgiven, but just rolled forward. Hence it is said, "And for this cause he [Christ] 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 which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15). Like this: Suppose you begin to roll a ball of snow; it grows larger and larger, until you roll it into the fire and it melts away. So, far back when time was young, sin begins to roll down the line of the centuries, gathering strength as it comes. It is rolled forward from year to year by Jewish sacrifices, until it finally rolls against the cross, where it melts away in the blood of the sinless Lamb. Hence we learn, from Heb. ii. 17, he made reconciliation. He also obtained redemption for us. (Heb. ix. 12.) "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Yes, indeed, "let us hold fast our profession." We can if we will. The crown is at the end of the race, and will never be obtained until the last battle is fought and the last victory won. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."



When I obeyed the gospel there were fifty-three others who started in the divine life at the same time. Frequently, in my hours of solitude, I ask myself the question, Where are the fifty-three? Brooding over the "long ago," I raise my voice and cry, Where are the fifty-three? As I listen, I hear a voice coming up from the relentless past, saying, Quite a number of them have died with the Christian harness on, and have gone to their reward. Thank the Lord, though gone, they have gained the victory. I ask, Where are others of the fifty-three? Down the corridors of the past I hear the answer coming, Some of them have lost their interest in Christianity, stopped by the wayside, and have wounded the cause of God. *That* I very much regret. But let me ask, Where is the remainder of the fifty-three? Bending my ear, the answer rends the air, Many of them are in the race with you. They are pressing toward the prize, they are striving to win the crown. Their eyes are upon the Saviour, their hand is in his wounded palm, and they are trying to walk in his footsteps all the way. The Lord be praised for that.

From Heb. ii. 18; iv. 15, we learn that Jesus sympathizes with the saints. It is a blessed thing to have sympathy, especially from the sympathizing Friend of man. At times the heart longs for sympathy, and it is a glorious thing to know our High Priest can "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He not only sympathizes

with us, but he actually intercedes in the Christian's behalf. (Heb. vii. 25; ix. 24.) Blessed Lord, I thank thee devoutly for pleading my case at the Father's throne. I need it so much. Poor me, I am so weak, I have nothing of merit to bring. Empty-handed I come; "simply to thy cross I cling," only pleading the merits of my blessed Saviour. "For we have not a high priest which can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Oh, the feelings of our infirmities are so great. All have them, and have them all the time. How precious the thought that Jesus is touched with them. Though they are mine, and though I am on earth, they touch the great, warm heart of my dear Redeemer while he is seated upon his mediatorial throne. O Father, we thank thee for coming so near us, and for feeling so very deeply for us through the riven side of Jesus. Such being true, "let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Indeed, it is a heaven-born privilege to be permitted to approach the heavenly Father, through our ever dear Friend, "who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

A very few thoughts on the qualifications of our Priest—Jesus—and I will close.

(a) He is holy. He is the very embodiment of purity and innocence.

(b) Not only is he pure and spotless, but perfect as well; perfect every way—in knowledge, power and goodness.

(c) Able and willing to help all who trust in him. Ready to assist not only the high, but also the low, the rich, the poor, old and young—every one who will believe in him, submit to his authority, and walk as he directs until life's fitful fever is past.

(d) He is full of sympathy. In our trials and temptations he will sympathize. He has traveled the road before us. He knows the desert of life is dark and thorny. Thank the Lord, he overcame the world. He overcame it, and so can we through him. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

## SERMON XXI.

### JESUS THE KING OF GLORY.

PSALM XXIV. 7-10.

The Psalmist touches his prophetic lyre, looks forward at least a thousand years, and sees the risen Lord with the pean of victory upon his lips approaching the gates of heaven, accompanied by the angelic host. As they near the gates of the heavenly city, the convoy of angels send forward the cry, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in." The hierarchies within the city gates ask, "Who is this King of glory?" Those in company with the triumphant Son of God respond, "The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." The Lord Jesus is mighty in battle. He has overcome sin, the world, Satan and the grave.

In the preceding sermon we considered Jesus as Prophet and Priest; now let us view him as King—the greatest king. For ages upon ages the world has been familiar with lords many and kings many, but Christ is Lord of all lords and King of kings. He conquered the king of terrors, and came forth from the tomb with the keys of death and the grave in his hands.

I. The great King and his kingdom described.

1. From Ps. xxiv. 7-10; I. Cor. ii. 8; Jas. ii. 1, we learn that he is glorious; yes, "covered all over with glory." His life on earth; his prayer in the garden; his petition on the cross, for his enemies; his quiet and submissive death on the shameful tree; his victory over death, and his triumphant entry into the New Jerusalem amid the peans of praise by the angels and the archangels, indicate he is to "reign over heaven and earth most glorious."

2. He is King supreme, as is evident from the following: "Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth" (Ps. lxxxix. 27). In Revelation the following is said: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords" (i. 5; xix. 16).

3. It is evident, from Luke i. 32 and Acts ii. 29, 30, that Jesus sits upon David's throne. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."

4. From Rev. iii. 21, we learn that Christ sits upon the throne of his Father. Not upon the throne of Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander, or the Cæsars—not upon the throne of England, upon whose possessions the sun never sets—but upon the throne of his Father. He is seated upon

the throne of the universe, and wields a universal scepter over all creation.

5. Christ Jesus has a righteous kingdom. It was not established by the gory hand of war; nor is it sustained and perpetuated by baptizing lands in blood and tears, but by saving its foes and encouraging everything which looks to the elevation of the race, the glory of God, and the universal reign of peace. The kingdom of Christ runs on the principle that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." These thoughts are made apparent by consulting the following passages: Ps. xlv. 6; Isa. xxxii. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; Heb. i. 8, 9.

6. The Saviour's kingdom is everlasting. (Dan. ii. 44; vii. 14; Luke i. 23.)

"The whirlwind's wrath,  
The earthquake's shock,  
Will leave untouched  
Its hoary rock."

When the conquering work of the King is done; when swords are beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks, and nations learn war no more; when the little stone which was cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll until it fills the whole earth; when Satan's works are destroyed, sin banished; when "mercy and truth meet together, and righteousness and peace kiss each other"—when all these things are done, "then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and

power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (I. Cor. xv. 24-28).

7. The kingdom of Christ is a universal empire, as we learn from the following: "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 7, 8). In this connection read Ps. lxxii. 8; Zech. xiv. 9. Indeed, the reign of Jesus is to be universal, reaching from sea to sea, from the rivers to the ends of the earth. Christ's proclamation is world-wide, gathering the whole family of man into its embrace.

8. Best of all, it is a spiritual kingdom. It is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It has a spiritual King, spiritual subjects, and a spiritual territory—the human heart. Being a descendant of Abraham does not give admission into it; but both Jew and Gentile enter it by a birth of water and spirit—by believing and obeying the gospel. Every step

connected with this kingdom is begun, carried on and consummated by the Spirit of God. The Spirit, through God's word, reveals to us the way into his kingdom, tells us how to behave ourselves "in the house of God, which is the church of the living God," and then says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

II. Jesus was acknowledged King on various occasions, and by different individuals.

1. The wise men traveling from the far East said, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" (Matt. ii. 2).

2. After Nathanael was convinced that something good could "come out of Nazareth," he confessed, "Thou art the King of Israel."

3. In the latter part of Christ's ministry, after the disciples had seen much of his eventful life, heard many of his wonderful sayings, and beheld his mighty works, they said, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest" (Luke xix. 38).

4. Christ himself acknowledges his kingship, when describing the scene which will be upon the plains of judgment. (Matt. xxv. 34.) Also, in replying to Pilate's question. (John xviii. 37.)

III. We will now notice the principal work of the great King.



1. To fulfil the law. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). Fulfilling the types and shadows, rites and ceremonies, Christ "took them out of the way, nailing them to the cross."

2. Jesus came to show us the Father. He is God personified—God localized. The Old Testament reveals especially the justice and wrath of God; but see his love and mercy plainly manifested in the life and sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. He came to destroy the works of Satan, the great enemy of man. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (John iii. 8).

4. He came that he might be the example of man.

5. He came to die for the sins of the whole world. His death is the "touchstone" of the gospel. It is that which has caused crowns and kingdoms to tremble, nations to bow like ripe wheat before the sickle, and Christ to be crowned Lord of all in so many penitent hearts. The death of Christ is the conquering "voice" of all history, and will finally swell the chorus of the redeemed—"Hallelujah to the Lamb."

6. Christ came to make laws for his kingdom. He is the great lawgiver of the Christian age, and has made

laws for all men and for all time. Note:—Before his death he taught principles more than laws. Laws legislate against the effect of sin; principles, against the causes of sin. Some of the great principles Jesus taught:

(a) *Purity.* (Matt. v. 8.) He taught purity of the heart, or inner life, knowing the outer life is only the exponent of the inner.

(b) *Christian liberty.* I am so thankful for the faith and freedom of the gospel. Not bound under the law, we are Christ's freemen, knowing, if we are made free by the truth, we are free indeed.

(c) *The Golden Rule* to regulate man's conduct toward man. It is the high-water mark in Christian behavior. The world has never reached it; the church will never surpass it in its dealings with men. His laws were the voice of authority. They were not borrowed from Confucius, nor from any rabbinical school, but came from his own unwasting fulness.

7. He came not only to make laws, but also to execute them. Laws amount to nothing unless enforced. The lawless must be punished, and the obedient rewarded; hence he said, The time is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, *they that have done good* unto the resurrection of life, and *they that have done evil* unto the resurrection of damnation."

8. He came to rule and care for his disciples. Jesus loves his own. He is the gentle Shepherd. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I know my sheep, and am known of mine." No one can harm the least of his brethren without his considering it a personal thrust at *him*.

#### IV. Some of the great laws of the great King.

1. *Love to God and man.* This law is strongly emphasized in the teaching of the great King. "Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. xxii. 35-39). God is a jealous God. He must have the first place in the heart's affections, or he will have none. Jesus would have us know that unless God is enthroned in the heart, he will not remain there. He is certainly well worthy of the most exalted position in the inner man. What an honor for this wicked and deceitful heart of mine to hold communion with Christ Jesus, the King of nations, and with my heavenly Father, the God of the universe—"for *God is love.*" And then to love my neighbor as myself. I have not time nor space to investigate this now. In considering this thought, such observations as the following

must be examined: (a) Who is my neighbor? (b) To love my neighbor as myself does not mean I must love all his faults; for I do not love mine. (c) I must endeavor to see myself, not as *others* see me, nor as *I* see myself, but as God sees me. Probably if I were able to see myself just as I am, my love for myself might not be so great as that for my neighbor.

2. The first part of the Commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," is a law that was given by the Saviour. In this are found the walking orders of the church. As he died for *all*, the "go" is for *all*. All the church go—if you can not go, "send a hand." The last nation's gateway has been opened to the missionary of the cross. Go up, and possess the land, we might say, are the orders of our King.

Brother, sister, what have you done, what are you doing, and what do you intend to do, to carry out this part of the Commission? There are many claiming to be loyal to Christ who have never given one cent for missions. What will you do with the "go" of the Commission? Is not that as binding as any other part of it? If not, why not? Many, instead of helping to send the gospel to the dark places of earth, are spending no little time discussing the question, "What will become of the heathen?" The question along this line should not only be, What is going to become of the heathen? but also, What will become of the church if it does not try to save the heathen?

What will you do with this question? Christ says, "Go into all the world." Will you do so? If not, will you assist in sending others? If not, can you claim to be loyal to the King? If you will not obey this commandment, will you obey any other if it does not suit you? It is true, much has been done, but very much more could be done if the church would approximate its duty. Our responsibility in the premises is very great. Mission work is an open door for those claiming to present the ancient gospel, believing it to be the power of God unto salvation to the believer. If the word of God be the seed of the kingdom, if the sinners are converted by the gospel and not by the direct operation of the Spirit, those who so believe should be in the front in sending forth the message of peace. Brethren, let us think and pray along this line; and in the future do something in the field of missionary endeavor more worthy of the Bible plea for which the Church of Christ contends.

3. The second part of the Commission is, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16). The faith and baptism are in order to salvation from past sins. Objector: "If baptism be a condition of pardon, why did not Jesus say, he that believeth not *and is not baptized* shall be damned?" Because Christ would have us understand that *infidelity* alone will condemn a man. While faith alone will not save, *unbelief alone will condemn him.*

It is like this: he who sows and cultivates shall reap. If he fails to sow, of course he will not reap, it matters not how well he tills the soil. So, if an individual does not believe, he will not be saved notwithstanding he might be baptized many times, or at least put under the water and raised out. Really, I am inclined to believe it is impossible for an infidel to be baptized. That is, there must be necessary preparation of heart and life upon the part of the subject before there can be a Scriptural baptism. Let that be as it may, baptism is a condition of pardon to the penitent believer.

Objector: "Baptism is a non-essential." How do you know? Have you been up there to see about it? Do not harp on preachers relative to "non-essentials," but go up to the throne of God, and say, Master, we have been investigating thy Scriptures; we have attended a theological seminary, and have posted ourselves on these things. We now desire to inform thee that thou hast made a mistake, and hast commanded some things which are non-essential, the chiefest of which is *baptism*. Why do *we* say baptism is essential? Because Ananias says to Saul of Tarsus—Acts xxii. 16. Because Peter says—I. Pet. iii. 20, 21; Acts ii. 38. Because Jesus says—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 16; Luke xxiv. 40-47. "*Hear him.*"

4. Third part of the Commission: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 20). Observe prayer. Observe Christian

life generally. The practical Christian life does not always receive from the pulpit the attention it should; but I have no space to emphasize the thought here.

V. Opposition to the great King.

1. Opposed by the man of sin. (II. Thess. ii. 3.)

2. By the dragon, beast and false prophet. (Rev. xiii. 3; xvi. 13.)

3. Consequences of opposing Jesus: (a) Shall be broken to pieces. (I. Sam. ii. 10; Ps. ii. 9.) (b) Shall be ground to powder. (Matt. xxi. 44; Luke xx. 18.)

4. The "King of kings" shall overcome all his enemies. (Ps. cx. 1; Mark xii. 36; I. Cor. xv. 25; Rev. xvii. 14.)

Sinner, do you desire to be overcome, or do you wish to be on the side of Jesus, who is to overcome all enemies? You can be on the side you prefer. Then, "turn you, oh, turn you; for *why will you die?*"

## SERMON XXII.

### CHRIST'S CALL.

MATTHEW XI. 28-30.

At least three things are implied in this call: First, *those invited are away from Christ*. It is not a distance which can be measured by feet and inches, but it has reference to a spiritual separation. Those included stand at a guilty distance from the Saviour. Second, *those called will be benefited by heeding the invitation*. One who has loved this world as Jesus has—one who has bowed the heavens in tender mercy to meet the needs of humanity—would certainly never ask us to do anything not to our advantage. Third, *those invited can come*. They are not chained away by God's irrevocable decrees. The very fact that Jesus says, "Come to me," is *prima-facie* evidence that we have the power to obey the command. I am so thankful salvation is free. Whosoever will can bow to the mandates of the Saviour, and rejoice in sins forgiven. Those who labor and are heavy laden are embraced in the invitation—those who feel their unworthiness—who are tired of sin, who regard a wicked life as a burden, and, realizing the need of a Saviour, are willing to flee to him for refuge. Oh that all were willing to rush from the storm of God's wrath into the sheltering fold.



There is a plain road to heaven—just as there is a well-marked highway from one city to another. If you were at one place, and were desirous of reaching the other, and did not know the way, it occurs to me your inquiries would be something like the following: Where is the road that leads there? How can I get to the road, and into it? Having learned these things, you would go to and into the desired road, turn your face toward the point sought, and travel on in that direction, feeling satisfied of reaching the place of destination by and by.

So it is, relative to going to heaven. To reach that blessed land, the following should be regarded: First, you must have an earnest desire to go. Second, you must find the way, and enter therein. Third, you must know how to continue in the way; then put into practice what you know, and the work is done, heaven gained. To reach the better Beyond, we must eagerly desire to do so. Certainly, every one wishes to go to heaven. Reader, do you not? So far as I am concerned, when the fitful fever of this life is past, I long to go to that glory land, where there will be no more heartaches, no more giving up of loved ones, no more funeral processions—nothing to mar or molest the happiness of those flushed with victory from earth's battlefields.

If you are desirous of reaching the land beyond, the next inquiry is, Where is the road that leads to the "sweet by and by"? Who will answer this question? Preachers

alone can not, for they differ; and as they do not agree, they themselves are fallible—are liable to be mistaken. Wise men can not settle it, for man is not able to know God by wisdom. (I. Cor. i. 21.) We are not willing to leave the answer alone in the hands of the reformers, for imperfection was written upon their brow, and, in answering a question of such momentous importance, no mistake must be made.

We do not ask you to be governed by what men say in the premises, but only come, and sit down at the feet of the blessed Master, and listen to the answer as it falls from his wise lips. In the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth chapters of John we have one of the most interesting conversations between Christ and his disciples that has been recorded. In the thirteenth chapter, Christ teaches his disciples some lessons of humility; and in the beginning of the fourteenth, he is consoling them relative to his departure: "Let not your hearts be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I **am the way**, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto

the Father but by me" (John xiv. 1-6). In this Scripture we learn the way or road under consideration is the one leading to heaven, and that Christ is the way. Notice, he does not say, "I am *a* way, or *one* of the ways," but "I am *the* way." And, so far as I know, he is the only way to heaven. He is the one spoken of by the prophets, and which was heralded by the harbinger in the wilderness. No accountable being has the promise of a blissful hereafter unless he comes by the cross, and has his sins washed away in the blood of the Lamb.

Some persons, in justifying divisions, claim there are different roads to heaven. There may be such in human fancy, but not in the Bible. In the Bible two roads are spoken of specially: the broad road leading to death, and the narrow way which conducts us to God's right hand. Christ being the way which leads to heaven, no responsible person has any promise of a blissful existence unless he is in Christ, walking after the Spirit.

Jesus having answered the question where the road is that leads to heaven, the next important inquiry in this line of thought is, How do we get to the road, or to Christ? Disregarding the voice of scholarship upon the subject, we will go immediately to Jesus, and listen to his reply to this query as it is recorded in John vi. 44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." From this we learn that we must be drawn; and God is the one who does it. Man's arm is too short, and

he is too frail to work himself into divine favor, independent of God's drawing power.

Another question right here worthy of consideration is, *How* does God draw us to Christ? By his power, says one. Right; what power? Not his physical power. Certainly no one thinks God draws the sinner to Jesus like the mother does her babe to her bosom. In Rom. i. 16 Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." I may be ashamed to preach the gospel, you may be ashamed to believe and obey it; but Paul was not ashamed of it. Though he was maltreated for preaching the gospel, he was neither ashamed, nor afraid to die in its defense—"for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." It is not *a* power to salvation, nor *one* of the powers, but it is *the* power; and, so far as I know, it is God's only power unto salvation to the believer.

Now, being moved heavenward by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, explain why Christ said, while standing upon Olivet with the keys of death and the grave in his hands, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The gospel is God's power unto salvation—go and tell it to the nations. The gospel being God's power to salvation is the reason we are trying to tell it to you in our feeble way. It is the reason we desire it sent to earth's remotest bounds. It is why we want money to send across the sea that the story of human redemption may be

poured into the benighted heathen's ears. Go tell it—tell it to the world around; and listen to its echo as it comes back upon the swelling tide of world-wide evangelism in peans of victory from souls newly born into the great spiritual family. In harmony with what Paul teaches relative to the power God employs in drawing us toward a better life, Christ says (John vi. 45): "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." According to the Saviour's instruction here, we are drawn heavenward by hearing and learning of the Father.

The question then arises, How do we hear and learn of the Father in reference to the soul's salvation from sin? If you have an idea that such information is received independent of the Scriptures, suppose you erase from your mind all you know about Jesus and the plan of salvation which came either directly or indirectly from the Bible, and see how much you know or believe. Were it not for the divine record, you could not believe a single event in his wonderful career. His birth, growth, baptism, temptation, sermons and sayings, transfiguration, trials, crucifixion, burial, resurrection and ascension would be like stories which had never been told. If you still insist that a knowledge of Jesus can be obtained some other way than through the teaching of the Scriptures, suppose you plume the pinions of your imagination and survey the heathen field. Be-

hold their modes of worship—see them sacrifice their children to various idols, and bow before stocks and stones, images made by men's hands; and when these things you see, raise your eyes heavenward, and ask yourself the question, How much do they know about the scheme of redemption which was made sacred by the blood of Christ? Nothing but what has been handed down by the flickering light of tradition, which, in this case, is a dim reflection from the pages of revelation. If there is any other source of spiritual illumination to-day save the teaching of the Bible, I am profoundly ignorant of it. We hear and learn of the Father through the Scriptures, and the result is faith, the first step toward the cross.

Let us see how far we have followed this course of investigation. We have learned from the Bible the following in this line of thought: That Christ is the way to heaven; we come to Christ by being drawn by the Father; we hear and learn of him through the teaching of the Bible. The result of such instruction is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Were there nothing more in the Bible as to how faith comes, the parable of the sower should be enough to forever settle that question. It is recorded in Matt. xiii., Mark iv. and Luke viii. Examine the parable critically; and, in connection with it, study the following passages: John xx. 30, 31; Acts xv. 7; Rom. x. 17. From this array of testimony we conclude that faith in Christ is produced by hearing or reading the word of God. After hearing or reading the gospel,

then, the first step toward Christ is to believe in him. The mere assent of the mind is not sufficient—we must have faith in him as a personal Saviour. It must be a faith which “works by love, and purifies the heart.” A faith which takes no denial—one that expresses itself in obedience.

After the step of faith is taken, a hearty repentance of sins must follow. Not simply to repent of *one* sin, but of *all*—every sin of life. Repentance is not godly sorrow, but there can be no repentance without godly sorrow. Repentance is not, strictly speaking, reformation, but there is no reformation without repentance. Critically stated, repentance is a change of will which has been produced by godly sorrow, and which results in a reformation of life. Repentance is often spoken of in the sense of reformation; and, speaking of it from that view-point, John Wesley well expressed what it is when he taught that repentance is to “turn your back upon the devil in all his ways.” In the terse style of Sam Jones, it is defined thus: “To quit your meanness.” To repent we must certainly quit our meanness. Repent, then. Repent, or perish, is the teaching of the New Testament.

Having repented—having come to the full determination, God helping, to turn the whole current of the life toward Calvary’s cross—it is now necessary to make the good confession. We must publicly confess the faith we have in the crucified One. The necessity of the confession is taught in the following Scriptures: Matt. x. 32, 33; xvi. 13-19; I.

Tim. vi. 12, 13; Rom. x. 10. The confession implies a complete surrender. Confess your faith in the Saviour. Surrender to him; run up the white flag of the heart.

Faith, repentance and the confession bring us *to* the way, but not *into* it—to Christ, but not *into* him; for the Bible states that something else conducts us into Christ. How do we get into Christ, the heavenward way? Are you ready for the answer? Will you believe what the Bible says in the premises? If so, listen to Paul: “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. vi. 3, 4). Paul here teaches that we get into Christ by being baptized into him. The expression “as many of us,” etc., would clearly indicate that by baptism Paul was conducted into Christ, the road leading to heaven. In harmony with Rom. vi. 3, 4, the same apostle states: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. iii. 26, 27). Then in Rom. vi. 3, 4 and Gal. iii. 26, 27 we are taught admittance into Christ through baptism.

No one can get into Christ without first coming to him. To come to him, we must believe, repent and confess our faith in Jesus. When we give our hearts to Christ by faith, our lives by repentance, and knock at the door for admit-



tance by the confession, by baptism we get into the way—into Christ, the heavenward road. No one is prepared for baptism unless the heart and life have been surrendered to the Saviour. If any one I *knew had not believed and repented* should demand baptism of me, I would not baptize him for any earthly consideration. I would just as willingly baptize a chunk as a man I knew was not prepared for it. But when any one is a penitent believer, let him be baptized into Christ, the road which leads to the blissful beyond.

Having entered Christ, continue in the strait and narrow way. Do not stop nor loiter by the wayside. So many do this. The crown is before you; and it will not be gained until the last battle is fought, the victory won. Labor on— toil on. Just as, when you are traveling from one city to another, you do not reach the point of destination at the place where you enter the way, so we do not generally enter heaven just where we get into Christ. We must travel on— must remain faithful. As milestones are situated along the road to tell the wayworn traveler the course to the destined place, so instructions are found in the Bible to the Christian pilgrim telling him how to conduct himself in order to reach, in safety, the sinless land. The blood-washed traveler's waybill to the deathless home is found in certain passages, as the following: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." And what shall I more say? Time would fail me to tell of Rom. ii. 7-10; Jas. i. 21-27;

II. Pet. i. 5-11, and many other passages of equal importance.

Under the influence of these and kindred spiritual thoughts, the faithful Christian ripens into the aged saint. Standing at the end of life's journey, with form bent and shattered by the blasts of years, and head whitened by the snowflakes of time, the aged Christian pilgrim hears, through faith, the gentle Shepherd calling, "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." Rest—oh, how sweet is rest! It is sweet to the farmer who has toiled all day—a long summer's day—in the intense heat of the sun, to close his day's labor, return home, and enjoy himself resting in the bosom of his family. To the student, who has been trimming his midnight torch in his lonely dormitory, from week to week, and from month to month—endeavoring to prepare himself for his life-work—it is sweet to close his collegiate course, bid his teachers and classmates farewell, and return home and rest under the parental roof, where he has spent so many pleasant hours. To him rest is sweet beyond expression. It is sweet to the storm-tossed sailor, who has been out upon the bosom of the ocean night after night, where the waves have been threatening to engulf his vessel; it is sweet for him to see a light shining upon the beach, where he can anchor his bark in safety. Rest from the lightning's glare, from the ocean's roar, from the dangers incident to a sailor's life—such rest must be sweet. Rest is sweet to the weary soldier who, for a long time, has been out in defense of his

country—who has marched over many fields of blood and carnage. When he hears the last murmur of a cannon's roar, as it dies away upon the evening breezes, to him it is sweet to lay down his musket, his knapsack leave behind, and go back to his father's house, or his own humble home, and enjoy himself in rest as he did before he heard his country's call.

Is it not sweet to the preacher, who for quite awhile has been far from home, calling sinners to repentance, and encouraging and instructing Christians while on their journey to the better land—is it not sweet for him to preach his last sermon, offer his last exhortation, bid his friends and brethren good-by, and return home to rest awhile with the waiting and anxious loved ones? Every preacher who has passed through such an experience says that rest like this is sweet. If rest like this is sweet, what must be the sweetness of the rest of heaven? Rest, not only for a year, not only for ten thousand years, but rest as long as the eternal years of God shall roll. Doubtless, this rest will be, not a literal cessation from labor, but a delightful change of work—a change from a life of weary toil and anxiety, to one of blissful service in the “sinless summer land.”

## SERMON XXIII.

### CHRIST THE GREAT JUDGE.

My task for the present is nearly done. I will soon lay down my pen as to this pleasant line of thought, which has all the time been in company with Jesus Christ, the Friend of both saint and sinner, and the Leader of humanity.

The reader and myself began with the Saviour in the faintest Biblical utterances concerning him; we followed him through the realms of prophetic statement. We heard the announcement of his birth to the busy shepherds; we heard the angels sing "Peace on earth, good will toward men;" and we lingered long at his humble cradle, drawing many incidental lessons therefrom. We passed hastily through his infancy, childhood and early manhood. We saw him baptized. We heard his Father confess him as the Son of his delight. We were with him when Satan severely tried him; and when he gained the victory for himself and humanity, we saw the heavenly messengers administer to his needs. We were with him upon the Mount of Transfiguration; we heard the rumbling of God's chariot wheels as he honored that assembly with his presence, confessed again that he was well pleased with his Son, and called upon the human race to "*hear ye him.*" We had the pleasure of moving very rapidly through his parables

and miracles; we also tarried awhile in the garden of sorrow, where “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.” We saw his tired frame bending beneath the ruthless cross; we heard the dull sound of the hammer, as, stroke after stroke, the nails were sent through his tender, quivering flesh. We beheld his bleeding brow upon Calvary; we saw the sun hide his face in shame, refusing to shine upon the horrible tragedy; we felt the earth shake as though passing through the chill of death. We saw him taken down from the cross, placed in the rock-hewn sepulchre; we stood by the grave, saw its mouth open, and the Conqueror come forth with the bars of death in his hand. After forty days, we saw him mount above the skies, and heard the angelic song of welcome as he approached the city of our God. Now we desire to consider him as Judge of the living and the dead.

The office of a judge, teaches Webster, is “to hear and determine, as in causes on trial; to pass sentence; to assume authority; to try anything and pass judgment on it; to compare facts or ideas, and perceive their relations and attributes, and thus distinguish truth from falsehood.” Of course, in the affairs of men, proper allowance for the frailties of human nature must be made, in *judging* as well as in anything else.

Jesus Christ is the only perfect judge that ever associated with men. That he is the great Judge of the universe is evident from the following passages: “For the Father

judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him ” (John v. 22, 23). “And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead ” (Acts x. 42). (See also Acts xvii. 30, 31; Rom. xiv. 10; II. Cor. v. 10; II. Tim. iv. 1, 2, 6-8.) The general tenor of New Testament teaching is that God has committed all judgment into the hands of the Son. God’s wisdom is manifest in this; for certainly a more suitable judge could not be found in all the universe. Being human, he enters into fullest sympathy with the weaknesses of our nature; being divine, he demands no more than justice tempered with mercy.

Let us examine qualifications of Christ, the great Judge, for rendering decision, *pro* and *con*, at the great judgment. He is an impartial Judge. No thought, word or act of his life indicates partiality in his judgments. Such an idea would contradict New Testament teaching. True, he doubtless loved some of his disciples more than others because they were more lovable, but in all his dealings with the race he never manifested a desire to do any one the slightest injustice. Being so equally poised upon the path of truth and rectitude, he would not at any time show an undue preference in passing sentence upon the children of men. This great Judge could not have been deceived. Deception was im-

possible, so far as concerned the law by which man is to be judged, for with the Scriptures he was entirely familiar. It could not have been that he did not know what the Father desired; for truth and righteousness were the habitation of his throne, and he was always in perfect touch with his God. Concerning human nature he could not be deceived; for man's heart before him is an open book. He is enabled to promenade the aisles of the labyrinths of human nature, and carry the searchlight of truth into the deep recesses of the heart. We may deceive ourselves or permit others to deceive us, but Christ Jesus the Lord no one can deceive. From his all-searching eye we can not escape.

Our Judge can not be bribed, mainly for two reasons: First, his wealth can not be increased. If all the bright, flashing, moving worlds in the blue fields of immensity, which look like so much glittering dust sprinkled upon the background of the ethereal regions, were gathered and placed at his feet, they would not increase his wealth one farthing. They are already his—can not be made more so. Second, because Christ is far above bribing. No sordid gain could influence him in rendering decision for or against man at the great assize of the universe. He is a Judge of love, mercy, wisdom, power—in fact, in this, as in everything else, there is not a qualification which could be added to his character that would better prepare him for doing the very best for all concerned.

Who is to be judged? "And before him shall be gathered *all nations*" (Matt. xxv. 32); small and great (Rev. xx. 12); the righteous and wicked (Eccl. iii. 17); quick and dead (II. Tim. iv. 1; I. Pet. iv. 5). Earth and sea will have to hand back each body sleeping in their bosoms, and let every one wend his way to the last judgment. In imagination I see every nation, kindred, tribe and tongue making its way to the final judgment to hear the fearful doom or glorious destiny. I turn my eyes toward the east, where the sun first kisses away the dew from the cheeks of morning, I hear the footfalls of the various nations while on their journey to the great assize of the world. Then, taking my stand on some lofty peak of the Rocky Mountains, I hear the ribs of the earth breaking; I feel the earth shudder as if it were passing through the throes of death; and then I see the sons and daughters of our proud America arising from the ashes of the tomb, and beginning their pilgrim march to the plains of judgment. All, all will be there. "When the last trumpet sounds, we will all be there."

We are to be judged not only for what we do, but also for what we do not do. Sins of omission as well as sins of commission will be considered when the time comes to balance accounts. Our words will then either justify or condemn us, as we find by consulting the following Scriptures and others. "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified,



and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matt. xii. 36, 37). “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14, 15).

The very thoughts—swift-winged messengers of light—which we harbor in our bosoms here, will at the judgment either rise up and condemn us, or, by showering their benedictions upon us, assist in giving a passport through the portals of glory. (Eccl. xii. 14; I. Cor. iv. 5.) How guarded, then, we should be relative to our thoughts. Of course, we can not prevent wicked thoughts occasionally flitting through the mind, especially when an injury is done; but we *can* keep from cherishing them. The natural order is thoughts, actions, character. If wicked thoughts are permitted to remain in the heart, they are very likely to result in unrighteous actions, and sinful actions make a bad character. Then, since actions, words or thoughts may condemn us, what manner of beings should we be?

None by nature can stand, for the Psalmist says: “If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who should stand?” “Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications: in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy right-

eousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. cxxx. 3; cxliii. 1, 2). Doubtless with the same thought in view, Paul says: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God" (Rom. iii. 19). Through grace—through Christ—we can stand. All the spiritual blessings are in Christ. Solomon says, "The house of the righteous shall stand." Christ teaches that those who hear his sayings and do them shall stand; for their house is upon the Rock, and bids defiance to the rain that falls and the storms that blow. Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Through faith in Christ and obedience to him, we win the crown.

The decision of the great Judge is final. There can be no appeal to a higher court, for there is no higher to which we can appeal. The decision in every case will be just, tempered with mercy. How fortunate is the human race to have such a Judge—a Judge who is impartial; can not be deceived; impossible to bribe him; one who never has to hesitate a moment to know how to mete out justice and mercy to all.

Let us imagine the final day of reckoning has come. This life of probation is ended. The time has come when all who are in their graves have come forth; "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they

that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The army of Satan is on the left side of God's throne, while Christ's army is on the right. Satan is leading his army, and Christ Jesus is leading his. Satan's army looks like a pall of darkness stretching off to the left; the army of our blessed Saviour looks like a sea of glory, spreading from pole to pole. In the army of darkness there is Cain, who slew Abel, then disclaimed being his "brother's keeper." His wretchedness is depicted by the poet in the following graphic language:

"Oh! the wrath of the Lord is a terrible thing!  
Like the tempest that withers the blossoms of spring,  
Like the thunder that bursts on the summer's domain,  
It fell on the head of the homicide Cain.

"And, lo! like a deer in the fright of the chase,  
With a fire in his heart and a brand on his face,  
He speeds him afar to the desert of Nod—  
A vagabond smote by the vengeance of God!

"All nature, to *him*, has been blasted and banned,  
And the blood of a brother still wreaks on his hand,  
And no vintage has grown and no fountain has sprung  
For cheering his spirits or for cooling his tongue!

"And the groans of a father his slumbers shall start,  
And the tears of a mother shall pierce to his heart,  
And the kiss of his children shall scorch him like flame,  
When he thinks of the curse that hangs over his name!

"And the wife of his bosom, the faithful and fair,  
Can mix no *sweet* drop in his cup of despair;  
For her tender caress and her innocent breath  
But stir in his soul the hot embers of death!

"And his offering may blaze, unregarded by Heaven,  
And his spirit may sigh, yet remain unforgiven,  
And his grave may be closed, yet no peace to him bring:  
Oh! the wrath of the Lord is a terrible thing!"

Down the line of this army of wickedness, there are those terrible characters whose lives are portrayed in the Bible. There is also that wicked tyrant, Nero, who slew his own mother, and who lighted his pathway, in his midnight rambles through the city of Rome, by the blazes which consumed faithful Christians. Not very far from him stands Julius Cæsar, who crossed the Rubicon, bathed his martial robe in the blood of the innocent, and then fell at the foot of Pompey's statue, having been betrayed by his intimate friend Brutus. In the same army is Alexander the Great, who caused the earth to tremble beneath his warlike tread while he bathed the world in blood and tears. Herod the Great, and Judas who betrayed his Master with a kiss, are prominent in the army of darkness and death. In fact, the wicked of all the past, present and future are found in the ranks of the greatest enemy of humanity. After taking one general view of this army, I hear the Saviour say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." We see them take up their line of march "from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power," and sink to endless ruin down. While the heart is sickened by such a scene, we turn our eyes to the right, and behold something more cheering.

In the ranks of the faithful we see righteous Abel, who "being dead, yet speaketh." His blood, which cried from the ground for revenge, we might say is typical of

“ all the righteous blood shed upon the earth ” from then until now. In this army we see Enoch, who walked with God, who passed into the spirit land without feeling the sting of death, and who “ had this testimony that he pleased God.” Prominent in the same company stands Abraham, that giant of the ancient faith. Yes, it was Abraham, that hero of the “ long ago,” who built that grand monument which has ever been the admiration of God’s children. Further down the line we find Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, and all the other Old Testament worthies. Coming further down the course of the centuries, we find the apostles of the Lamb, and all those of undying faith revealed to us upon the pages of the later ancient story. The good of all the past, present and future belong to the army of the faithful. Near this army is that throng of little infants which are “ not lost, but gone before,” standing upon the banks of the jasper sea.

Then I hear the Saviour say, “ Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” As the ransomed host begin to move into that “ house of many mansions,” I hear the Saviour say to the angels, “ Sing a song.” The angels ask, “ What shall the song be?” Christ Jesus the Lord responds, “ Let it be ‘The Harvest Home.’ ”

## SERMON XXIV.

### FOUR QUESTIONS CONCERNING CHRIST.

GALATIANS III. 20-25.

In ancient days there was one whose duty it was to lead the children to and from school. Such a one was called a "child-leader." The same idea seems to be in the word from which we have "schoolmaster" in the text.

Paul would have us understand the law was our "child-leader" to bring us into Christ. The fingers of the law point down the stream of the centuries to Christ, who is the central thought of the entire Bible. As the sun is the center of the solar system, sending light and heat to every part of the planetary sphere, just so the Christ of God is the center of the Christian system, sending his radiating beams almost from Eden's shades to the Isle of Patmos. In imagination I see him standing, like a mighty giant, in the midst of the ages, gilding the pages of revelation with his free spirit, ruling over his kingdom, and filling the gospel with his own unwasting fulness.

All the bloody sacrifices upon the Jewish altar, the smoke ascending as they are being consumed, other types, the shadows and prophecies, are all pointing to the bleeding Lamb of God. Standing by the cross, there are especially four questions which present themselves for solution:

I. Who is Christ? While this is an old question, and one it seems could be easily settled, it is so vitally connected with the welfare of man as to be worthy of our most serious and profound consideration.

1. Listen first to the testimony of Christ's enemies:

(a) "Spinoza spoke of him as the truest symbol of heavenly wisdom.

(b) "The beauty and grandeur of his life overawed even the flippant soul of Voltaire.

(c) "'Between him and whoever else in the world,' said Napoleon I. at St. Helena, 'there is no possible term of comparison.'

(d) "'If the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage,' said Rousseau, 'the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.'

(e) "'He is,' says Strauss, 'the highest object we can possibly imagine with respect to religion, the Being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible.'

(f) "'The Christ of the Gospels,' says Renan, 'is the most beautiful incarnation of God in the most beautiful of forms. His beauty is eternal, his reign will never end.'

(g) "John Stuart Mill spoke of him as 'a man charged with a special, express and unique commission from God to lead mankind to truth and virtue'" (Britannica).

This is the testimony of some of the most learned skeptics and infidels of the past relative to who Christ is. No one, friend or foe, has ever been able to point to one stain upon his record. Just think—Christ's life has been before the world for near two thousand years, for its admiration or censure, during which time the world has passed through the Dark Ages, the Reign of Terror, etc., and the most astute infidel has never discovered a blemish in his life. Well might the gifted Renan say, "His beauty is eternal and his reign will never end." How could you say that, sir, and not believe in him? How could you admit so much of his real claims, and still believe he was an impostor? Peace to your ashes, Renan; but, sir, you must go down in history as being very inconsistent: to say so many complimentary things about Jesus—to claim he was the purest, the most perfect specimen of humanity that has ever been—and then believe him to have been *no more than a man*. If he was simply a man, he was certainly the greatest impostor that ever lived, for he claimed to be much more. How could Jesus have been such an ideal man, and at the same time such a base deceiver? Consistency, thou art a jewel, even when investigating the claims of our Lord and Master.

2. Now weigh the testimony of his friends.

(1) Reflect upon the voice of scholarship in ancient and modern times. The number of Christ's friends among them is too tedious to mention. If Jesus is not



the Son of God, there is no value in learning, for by far the majority of the most correct thinkers and writers claim that he was. If Jesus Christ is not the Son of the living God, there is no virtue in truth, and, really, falsehood is better than truth; for there has never been a truth told this world which has done it as much good as this falsehood, if it be a falsehood.

(2) John the Baptist says, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." Christ is to increase, while I am to decrease. I am not worthy to stoop down, and unloose the latchet of his shoes. I am simply the morning star, while he is the Sun of righteousness, which comes to earth with healing in his beams.

(3) The apostle Peter acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus in the following connection: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. xvi. 16). The anointed Son of the living God—not a dead God, "as there be gods many and lords many." With their blood Peter and the other apostles sealed their testimony as to the divinity of Jesus. The course of the apostles is more difficult to understand if Jesus was a deceiver than if he was the Son of God. If he was not divine, the apostles testified to a falsehood, and died rather than tell the truth in the premises.

(4) John, the apostle of love, the one who was doubtless in closest communion with Christ, says: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples,

which are not written in this book; but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through his name" (John xx. 30, 31). John would have us understand these things are given that humanity might have testimony upon which to predicate its faith in the divinity of Jesus, the sinless One.

(5) Christ has a right to testify in his own behalf. He says: "I came down from heaven." "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." The burden of the Saviour's testimony in the gospel narratives concerning himself is, I am the divine Son of God; and come to earth as the expression of the Father's love in calling man back from his wanderings to the unclouded home in the elysian fields of bliss. Christ lost his life for confessing that God was his Father. At no time did he seem to doubt for a moment that he was the expression of his Father's love—that he was the Son of the Highest.

(6) On two occasions, at least, God confessed the divine sonship of Christ. Once, after John had baptized him, the Spirit assumed the form of a dove, came down and lighted upon him, and a voice spoke from the eternal world, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." At another time, when Jesus was transfigured in the presence of Peter, James and John, Moses and Elijah, the eternal expression came thundering through the skies, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I

am well pleased: hear ye him." The testimony of the ages is overwhelmingly in favor of the proposition that Jesus Christ is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Imagine Matthew, Mark, Luke and John standing around the cross. Looking up to Christ, we ask Matthew, "Who is this?" He says, "This is the King of Israel." We then ask Mark, "Who is this one hanging on the cross?" He responds, "He is the great wonder-worker of the ages." We turn to Luke, and ask him, "Who is this—this bleeding one on the cross?" He replies, "This is the Son of man." Last, approach John, the one who so often leaned upon the Saviour's breast, and ask him, "Who is this one that came from afar, *your special friend?*" Hear him gently say, "This is God manifest in the flesh—this is the everlasting Son of God." Therefore, when we ask the question, "Who is Christ?" the four evangelists respond, He is Israel's leader, the mighty worker of miracles, the undying friend of man, and God's beloved Son.

II. How can I get in fellowship with Christ, or become a Christian?

Should any one ask me, "What must I do to be saved?" or how to become a Christian, I would advise him to study first the great commission, as recorded in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Luke xxiv. 45-47. A summary of the commission is, Preach the gospel to

every creature; he that believes in Christ, repents of every sin, and is baptized into the names of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, shall be saved, or pardoned of past sins. God pardons, but does it upon stipulated conditions. He who believes and obeys the gospel has the promise of pardon. If the question then is, "What must one do in order to become a Christian?" in the light of the commission, I reply, *Believe, repent and be baptized.*

Having studied the foregoing passages closely and critically, if any person desires further information concerning the law of pardon, I advise him to carefully examine Acts in connection with the great commission. Acts of Apostles is the book of conversions. It is a picture-book, representing the different stages of the unsaved, and giving each class the proper instructions. Any one who ignores Acts, in studying conversion, demonstrates the fact that he does not know how to rightly divide the word of truth. Every case of conversion recorded in the Bible, which occurred under the Christian dispensation, is found in Acts of Apostles.

In the apostles' age all became Christians in the same way, notwithstanding—if my memory is not at fault—D. L. Moody once said, he did not think any two persons were converted alike. I do not believe it, if he *did* say it. Great men sometimes make great mistakes. That God has only one law of induction into his kingdom ought not to be thought strange. How many ways are there of be-

coming a Mason? Just one—all take the same initiatory steps. The same is true in attaching yourself to any human institution. Why should God have different courses for men to pursue in becoming members of his family? Paul teaches that the gospel would go to all alike. (Col. i. 6.) I am satisfied the Pentecostians all became Christians the same way. Should any one who was a *believer*, like they were on Pentecost, ask me what to do, I would tell him to “repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.” If the one asking the question should be a *penitent believer*, like Saul of Tarsus, I would say in the language of Ananias, “Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” If the inquirer should be a heathen, like the Philippian jailer, I would say, as Paul and Silas did, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ,” etc. Like them, I would know he could not believe without testimony. Hence I would “preach to him the word of the Lord,” and, if he desired me, I would baptize him “the same hour of the night.” Would not that be right? Would it not be apostolic? I certainly think so.

The prevalent idea, that one becomes a Christian in one way, and another in some other way, does no little harm. Some seem to think God just warps his plan of salvation to suit the whims of men. Instead of warping his plan to suit man, man must warp himself to suit the plan. The trouble is not with God, but with man. It is man who is

out of harmony with God, not God out of harmony with man. God has not turned his face from man, but man has turned his face from God. Hence the world must be reconciled to God, not God to the world.

Some pray and preach as though God was out of humor with the sinner. Hence, in their revivals, they are frequently inconsistent. They will preach to the sinner that God is willing to save him, and when they get the sinner willing, and he comes to the "anxious-seat" to obtain the blessing, they then pray God to be willing to pardon—they beseech him to be reconciled to the sinner. The actions of the preacher would indicate that it was difficult to get both God and the sinner willing at the same time. Consistency, thou art a jewel in teaching conversion.

Then, sinner, study the conversion of the three thousand in the second chapter of Acts; of the Samaritans and the eunuch in the eighth; of Saul of Tarsus in the ninth, twenty-second and twenty-sixth; of Cornelius in the tenth and the first part of the eleventh; of Lydia and the jailer in the sixteenth; and the conversion of the Corinthians in the eighteenth chapter. If doing what they did made Christians of them, if you will do the same, you will become a Christian. So, then, especially Acts of Apostles answers the question how to become a child of God—a Christian.

III. How can I continue in fellowship with Christ, or remain a child of God?

The Epistles answer the question. Of course, you find much valuable information along that line in the life of Christ, and all through the Bible, but that part which was given especially to Christians is the twenty-one Epistles, commencing with Romans and closing with Jude.

It is very important to know how to live the Christian life. To tell any one how to become a Christian, and not instruct him in right living, would be giving directions to a strange road, but imparting no information relative to continuing in the right way. Here is where so many church-members make a fatal mistake. They start well, but do not continue. They never pass beyond Acts. They never make any advancement in the divine life. They plant the crop, but do not cultivate it. In the Epistles we have such instruction as the following: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in our body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one

members one of another.” Then, beginning with the ninth verse, we have the following: “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another; not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. xii. 1-5 and 9-21). Sometimes I think had we nothing but the twelfth chapter of Romans, it would form a right good book of etiquette for Christians. It contains very much more than many church-members *do*. We have so many passages to the same effect—some of which are the following:



Jas. i. 21-27; II. Pet. i. 5-11; Rom. ii. 7-11; Heb. xii. 1, 2, and many other passages.

The third question, then, is, How can I remain in fellowship with Christ? The Epistles respond, by living a consistent Christian—by being prayerful, living honestly, telling the truth, paying your debts, giving as the Lord has prospered you, doing all the good you can, and as little harm as possible.

IV. Last question: What is the *result* of remaining in fellowship with Christ? Does it pay to live the Christian life? It is said the Englishman's question is, What will it cost? while the American asks, Will it pay? I am certainly voicing the sentiment of every Christian when I say, Yes, it pays to be a child of God.

Christian, when that loved one who has obeyed the gospel was lying, trembling in the balance, struggling in the twilight of two worlds; when you saw the embers of life fast sinking; as you caught the broken notes of that song which so beautifully expresses the love of Jesus for us—I say, when you witnessed that scene, and heard the sweet cadence of that precious, but failing voice, which was being choked by the hand of death, did you not think it paid to be a Christian?

That you may furthermore have some faint conception of how much it pays to be a child of God, take your stand by the side of the beloved apostle John in the Isle of Patmos; and have something like the following conversa-

tion with him: "John, you know for a long time eternity's shore has been veiled from us. You have just had the privilege of taking a panoramic view of the Christian's Eldorado, the land of bliss. I desire to ask you some questions relative to the home of the blest. In this country we have alternate day and night; sometimes it is day, and then it is night. After we have had a beautiful day, we frequently regret to see the day-god bow his head behind the western hills, permitting twilight to come creeping over the earth again. Is there any night in heaven?" The beloved apostle responds, "No, there is no night there; that home is lighted up by the countenance of our blessed Saviour."

"We have many tears here, John. The old, the young, the middle-aged—all weep. There have been so many tears of grief shed upon the shores of time, that frequently we speak of lands being bathed in tears. Are there any tears of sorrow in that land of light and love?" "No, Christian, no; they are all wiped away by the fingers of Jehovah."

"In this world we have something which goes through the country, the hamlets, towns and cities—on land and sea. Here it snatches the babe from the mother's bosom; there it cuts down the father upon the battlefield of time. Yonder it touches the pulse, and it ceases to beat; eyelids, and causes them to sleep; the tongue, and it talks no more. We call it death here; we know not a better name for it.

Death has almost converted this world into a revolving graveyard. I want to know, John, is there any death in heaven?" "No, Christian pilgrim, no; that is the land of the living. Death is a stranger there; no tears, sorrow, pain nor death. No gray hairs are there; no bent forms; no wrinkled brows, nor furrowed cheeks—'no more good-bys.' Nothing there is calculated to mar or molest the happiness of those so fortunate as to reach that blissful clime."

The Lord be praised for his wonderful blessings to the children of men.

## SERMON XXV.

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?” (MATT. XXII. 42), AND WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH HIM? (MATT. XXVII. 22).

The following sermon concludes this series. I have prosecuted my task with no little pleasure and profit to myself, and, so far as my readers are concerned, I trust the work will not be entirely in vain.

In the theme of this closing discourse are found two of the most important questions which ever engaged the attention of mortals: “What think ye of Christ?” and What will you do with him? We will now consider the first query:

I. “What think ye of Christ?” This is the foundation of the New Testament—in fact, of the entire Bible. The Bible stands or falls with this query. If it stands, the Bible stands; if it falls, the Bible must go down with it. Hence the destiny of the human race hangs upon this question. Now, kind reader, what do *you* think of Christ? I trust you have repeatedly read his thrilling story, found in the New Testament. Having done this, and having received what little information you may have gathered from the twenty-four sermons just read, what think you of Jesus? You have quite likely come to the following conclusions:

1. Jesus Christ was human.

(a) He had a human mother. The Virgin Mary was of the flesh. She was a descendant of David. She lived, walked, talked and died as other mortals do.

(b) Christ had a human form and a human frame, as we learn from the following: "And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Luke xxiv. 36-43).

(c) Jesus slept, as we learn from what transpired upon the sea of Galilee. The storm-king, treading upon the placid bosom of the sea, rocked it into foam. The waves, rising higher and higher, threatened the destruction of the boat in which Christ and his disciples were sailing. The disciples, being affrighted, awoke Jesus, who, arising from his slumbers, said to the surging billows, "Peace, be still." The storm-king departing, the waves ceasing their frantic sports, the vessel no longer rocking and reeling, the disciples became quiet and merry again.

(d) That the Saviour became weary is evident from John iv. 6. Returning from Jerusalem, he was making his way into Galilee, but "he must needs go through Samaria." Jesus was resting upon Jacob's well when he introduced that conversation which seems to have resulted in leading the woman out of Samaritan idolatry through the moonlight of Judaism into the glorious spiritual sunlight emanating from the Sun of righteousness.

(e) "Jesus wept." It might well be said of this verse, "*Multum in parvo.*" Though the shortest verse in the Bible, it by no means contains the least. Christ wept because he loved Lazarus. His weeping, too, was doubtless in consequence of his sympathy for Mary and Martha. They were truly objects of pity, Lazarus probably being their only stay. Christ's meditations upon the graves of the past and future may have caused him to weep. He knew the grave was the common lot of all; he knew it was the place where weeping humanity would come in all ages, and embalm its cold verge with tears.

Christ wept not for his own transgressions; for he had no sin, as we learn from Heb. iv. 15. He bore his cross, saw the tears of the multitude and perhaps of angels (if angels ever weep), was crucified; yet, so far as we know, did not weep. "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children," he said to the daughters of Jerusalem. They refused him nature's beverage—a drink of water; yet he wept not. He saw God forsake him; yet wept not

over his own distress. Look into God's word, and there see the Saviour's tears embalmed. He wept not for himself, but for others.

2. Jesus was not only human, but also divine.

(1) He had a divine Father. Notice what Christ claims for himself in John viii. 33-59.

(a) He teaches that the Son abideth in the Father's house forever.

(b) If the Son makes us free, we are free indeed. Free, not from bodily ailments, not from pain and death, but from past sins. To be free from jail, penitentiary or from the gallows is a great blessing; but far greater is the privilege of being free from God's condemnation—from eternal banishment from our Father's blissful presence.

(c) Christ claimed to speak what he had seen with his Father. Not what a heavenly messenger had delivered unto him; not even what the Father had said to him; but what he had *seen with* his Father. Very clearly indicating that he had been with the Father, was in perfect touch with him, and his message came immediately from God's unwasting fulness, he said, "For I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."

(d) Jesus forcibly intimates he is sinless; for he asks the question, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" No one in his day convicted him of sin. The Pharisees, Sad-

ducees, Herod, Pilate, and all failed to find where sin had ever stained one act of his life. The united voice of the carping critics of the past and present is, "We find no fault in him." We find no fault in anything he ever thought or said. We find no fault in any of his actions. We have searched closely, and we find no fault in his course toward the rich. It is true, he spoke to them plainly—warned them of the deceitfulness of riches—condemned their every sin; but he always spoke the truth, and ever manifested an interest in their welfare. No one can object to any act of his toward the poor. He always treated them kindly, and even tenderly, and associated with them freely. In fact, no act of our blessed Saviour toward friend or foe, in life or the dying hour, can be justly criticised.

(e) Jesus claimed to honor his Father. (John viii. 49.) There are a great many children who fail to honor their parents. Instead of honoring them, they frequently act in a way to disgrace them.

(f) In John viii. 50, Christ says, "I seek not mine own glory." So many do. They are so selfish, they never look beyond their own interest. There is much self-seeking in the field of endeavor. The politician, lawyer, farmer, doctor, warrior, statesman, and even the preacher, are frequently actuated by no higher motive than self-glory. Christ's life, sighs, blood and tears were for others, not for himself.



(*g*) Jesus claims that whosoever keepeth his sayings "shall never see death" (verse 51). A marvelous statement this—claiming to have the power to banish death from the vision of the obedient believer. Here, by death he doubtless means eternal banishment from the Father's house. Who is willing to challenge this declaration? We might say it is the universal verdict of the best thinkers of the different centuries that beyond the confines of time there is a deathless land, to which all the faithful are traveling.

(*h*) Our blessed Saviour states again, "It is my Father that honoreth me" (verse 54). It would be quite a favor to have the Governor honor us. It would be a far greater blessing to be honored by the President of the United States. Eternity alone can tell how great the privilege of being honored by our heavenly Father, and by Christ Jesus our Lord.

(*i*) Another marvelous statement made by Jesus is, "I know him, and if I should say I know him not, I should be a liar like unto you; but I know him, and keep his sayings."

(2) Having briefly considered the claims of Christ, we will pause for a short time, and view his official character.

(*a*) He was in union with his Father. This is made manifest in the prayer Jesus offered just before reaching the cross: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name

those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are" (John xvii. 11). From Christ's sayings, sermons and actions it is evident there was a perfect oneness between him and the Father.

(b) Christ is God's only absolute representative, as we learn from the following: "All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).

(c) Christ Jesus the Lord is the only perfect mediator between God and the human race, as is taught in the following Scriptures: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I. Tim. ii. 5, 6).

(3) We will pay our respects, in passing, to the character of Christ's mission.

(a) He "was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Christ was, and is, the Light of the spiritual universe. How dark—how very dark—this world would be without Jesus.

(b) Christ is the only one who can give perfect freedom; for "if the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed."

(c) He is the Author of salvation, as we learn from the following: "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. v. 8, 9).

(d) Jesus is not only the author of salvation, but he is the great life-giver. To confirm this statement I will direct you to the two following Scriptures: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" (John v. 40). "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John x. 10).

(4) Christ had the attributes of God, but upon them I have not space to dwell.

(5) There were unmistakable evidences of his divinity in the death, resurrection and ascension of the spotless Lamb of God. If you doubt that there were divine manifestations when Jesus died, see the sun hide his face, and feel the earth rocking upon the lap of Omnipotence, and "be not faithless, but believing." If you are skeptical as to there having been evidences of divinity when Christ arose, behold the sealed tomb, the stone rolled away, the two heavenly messengers robed in white; and hear earth's ribs breaking as the Saviour arose, planting the standard of a deathless life upon the verge of the grave. Do you

doubt that divinity bowed and kissed humanity at the time of the ascension? If so, view Christ on Olivet, with his disciples about him; see the two men who stood by his followers in white apparel; and behold our Saviour, riding upon the bosom of a cloud into the deathless and sinless land.

Now, reader, "what think you of Christ?" Having considered the humanity and divinity of Jesus; having examined the Saviour's claims, his personal character, his official character, and the character of his mission, what do you think of Jesus of Nazareth? Are you willing to concede all he claims for himself? If so, the next question which confronts us is:

II. "What will you do with Jesus?" When Pilate propounded this question, he was on the judgment-seat. His wife had already said to him, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." The last stage of the trial was pending when the question was asked which threw the people into a tumult.

1. When we ask what Pilate did with Jesus, the Bible responds, he scourged him, even after asking, "What evil hath he done?" This question was only another way of saying, "I find no fault in him." In the *Christian Advocate* the following is well said: "Pontius Pilate was a type of all compromises. He knew Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against him by the Sanhedrim, and he was

really anxious to set him free. To accomplish this end he resorted to all sorts of expediences; but when these failed, he lacked the moral courage to do what was right and just without regard to the consequences that might follow. After temporizing with the mob which he despised, he weakly yielded to its demands, and so he has been forever pilloried in the pages of history. His own lips pronounced a judgment upon himself when he said, 'Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.' What good did it do him to wash his hands after his cowardly surrender, and to say: 'I am innocent of the blood of this just person'? Could such a poor protest efface the stain from his soul? Compromise is all right till it touches a principle; then it becomes an enormity."

2. Now see what *Herod* did with Christ. "And Herod with his men of war set him at naught, and mocked him, arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate" (Luke xxiii. 11).

3. The Jews and Gentiles rejected Christ, and placed upon him a mock robe, and, putting upon his head the rugged crown, crucified him between two malefactors.

4. Atheists, deists, infidels and skeptics ignore the Saviour's claims, and contradict each other in their statements, in which they endeavor to account for what the Bible reveals relative to him.

5. All should accept Jesus. To do so, we must believe on him with the whole heart, heartily repent of every sin,

and be buried with him in baptism upon a confession of our faith. In other words, we must give him the heart by faith; the life by repentance; must confess him, as an indication of a complete surrender, and then be baptized in the name of the divine three, rising from the watery grave to "walk in newness of life."

6. *What will you do with Jesus? YOU?* It is a personal question. Each individual must settle the question for himself. Your destiny is hanging in the balance. Which way will you turn it? It is with *you*—the responsibility rests upon you.

If you decide to reject Christ, thus giving a deaf ear to the call of mercy, how terrible your condition! It would have been far better for you never to have had an existence. Your portion is blighted hopes, ruined fortunes, remorse of conscience and finally endless destruction.

If your decision is to live and die in sin, you might as well exclaim, like Job, "Let the day perish wherein I was born. . . . Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. As for that night, let darkness seize upon it, let it not be joined with the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months. Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein. Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning. Let the stars of the twilight

thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day" (Job iii. 3-9).

If your determination is to "take the name of Jesus with you"—to have no will of your own, thus unreservedly surrendering yourself to the perfect Prophet, Priest and King all will be well. It will be well in life, triumphant in death, and glorious in eternity. All the promises of the gospel you can claim while living; hope will cheer and support you in death; the conquering Leader will gently conduct you into his Father's blissful home, which is lighted by the countenance of the blessed Son of God. *There*, having been healed by the great Physician, and acquitted by the impartial Judge, you can spend eternity in bliss unalloyed,

"AT THE FEET OF JESUS."