

*The* BEAUTY *and* BENEFITS *of the*  
CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

ILLUSTRATED IN

TWO SERMONS,

DELIVERED

TO THE FIRST RELIGIOUS SOCIETY  
IN PLYMOUTH,

ON JANUARY 5, 1800,

Being the LORD'S-DAY immediately following the

ORDINATION

OF THE

Reverend Mr. *KENDALL*

To the Work of the GOSPEL MINISTRY in that  
SOCIETY.

---

---

By DAVID TAPPAN, D.D.

Hollis Professor of Divinity in Harvard College.

---

---



---

---

Printed by SAMUEL HALL, No. 53, Cornhill, BOSTON.

1800.

---

---

---

## PSALM XLVIII. 2.

BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION, THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH, IS MOUNT ZION, THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

---

**T**HIS psalm is one continued and rapturous celebration of the beauty, safety, and happiness of the CHURCH ; which, by an easy figure, is called Mount Zion. This ancient hill not only possessed superior advantages of nature and art, but it was the chosen seat of the God of Israel. Here his temple was erected, his worship was solemnized, and his favor and glory beamed forth upon the surrounding country. In Zion or Jerusalem, the types and the substance, the leading predictions, narratives, and memorials of the *christian redemption* successively made their first appearance, and thence widely diffused their blessed effects. As Mount Zion was, in these respects, a striking emblem of the church of God ; so the name of the one is used to designate the other, in its Jewish, evangelical, and glorified state. As the New-testament church is essentially one with the Old, yet far exceeds it in glory ; so the honorable epithets, which here describe the latter, are eminently true of the former. Well therefore may christians adopt the exulting invitation,  
which

which this psalm addresses to all, whether friends, strangers, or enemies to Zion, to come and take a full survey of her regular and magnificent, her firm and durable structure :—WALK ABOUT ZION ; GO ROUND ABOUT HER ; TELL THE TOWERS THEREOF ; MARK YE WELL HER BULWARKS ; CONSIDER HER PALACES ; THAT YE MAY TELL IT TO THE GENERATION FOLLOWING ; FOR THIS GOD IS OUR GOD FOREVER AND EVER.

We propose to apply the description of the text to the CHURCH OF CHRIST, or to the collective body of his visible disciples, and those smaller societies, of which it is composed.

A subject of this kind eminently corresponds with the solemnity of the past week, and with the pious errand of our Fathers to these western shores. As the discourse, delivered on the late Ordination,\* pointed us to THE ROCK, the strong and immovable foundation, on which the church is built ; so our present attention is directed to the order and beauty of her superstructure, or to her excellent principles, institutions, and manners, and their happy effects. If the people of America justly glory in their wise and beneficent political constitutions ; with how much greater reason may the citizens of Zion exult in the heavenly constitution, the divine maxims, the infinite blessings of the Messiah's kingdom ! How peculiarly does it become you, my brethren, who belong to the first, and in some sense the parent church in America, and who have just received a new Minister of Zion ; how much does it become you, at this affecting moment, to lose the politics, the wars  
and

---

\* Viz. the sermon preached by Rev. Mr. FRENCH on Matth. xvi. 18. "On this rock will I build my church," &c.

and revolutions of earthly States and Empires, in an Object infinitely more stable and sublime ; in the transcendent glory of that KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED, and to which, as christians, you are supremely devoted ! You will therefore give your devout and improving attention, while we contemplate the church, first, as BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION ; and secondly, as THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH.

Beauty, when predicated of any work of nature or art, intends a just and delicate proportion of its several parts ; which gives a pleasing order and harmony to the whole. In this case the more diversified or complex the production, the greater is the delightful effect.—The visible creation, by uniting perfect correspondence with infinite variety, presents an unrivalled scene of natural beauty.

The church of God exhibits analogous, and even superior beauty. In her we behold a more diversified, harmonious, and complete display of the divine character. In the redemption of Zion we see a manifold and unparallelled combination of majesty and condescension ; of justice and mercy ; of wisdom and energy ; of tender and free, yet pure and awful benevolence. We see a vast assemblage of different causes and agents, of jarring counsels and measures, of apparently contingent and discordant events, ultimately harmonizing in one glorious design. We see all parts of nature and providence, all the great movements of the political and moral world, with the successive revelations, as well as works of God, from the beginning to this day, evidently forming and fulfilling one grand scheme in favor of Zion. In the oracles of God, committed to the church, and containing her constitution and laws, we behold aston-

E
ishing

ishing diversity and seeming confusion in point of method, matter, and style, secretly moulded into one regular and perfect whole. We behold history and prophecy, doctrine and precept, threatening and promise, thrown together with apparent negligence, yet each wonderfully suited to the moral education and improvement of the church, in the several periods and circumstances of her existence.

In the early ages, her divine Founder and Guardian instructed and protected her in a special or miraculous way, fitted to her infantile state. He also wisely taught her in a gentle and gradual manner, by a series of types, predictions, and promises. The Mosaic economy enlarged and systematized this mode of instruction. It established a pompous but significant ritual, adapted to the genius and circumstances of the Hebrew nation.— This ritual, in connexion with corresponding and impressive dispensations of providence, tended to guard that people against heathen idolatry and superstition ; to keep them perpetually distinct from all other nations ; to preserve among them, and thus maintain in our world, the knowledge and worship of the true God ; to remind them of great divine deliverances, and of the duties thereby enforced ; to teach them moral purity, repentance, and obedience, by emblems strongly addressed to their imaginations and senses ; and above all, to carry forward their faith and hope to the dispensation of the Messiah, and to prepare them and surrounding nations for his predicted appearing.

How beautiful the situation of God's antient church, when viewed in these lights ! What honor was hereby reflected on her DIVINE CONDUCTOR ! What provision was made for the improvement and welfare of her members !

But

But the lustre of the Jewish church fades before the superior excellence of the christian, as the discipline and attainments of childhood are lost in the nobler conceptions of manly age ; or as the twinkling stars vanish before the rising sun. The transcendent beauty of the Gospel Zion appears in her doctrine, discipline, worship, and manners.

First, in her DOCTRINE. The prime article of christian faith, on which the church of Christ is built, and by which it is eminently distinguished from the infidel world, is the belief of one SUPREME GOD, manifesting himself to sinful men in the glorious person and redemption of his Son. The restoration of a fallen world by the free grace of God through a Mediator, is the center and scope of the divine counsels, revelations, and works respecting our apostate race. An obscure but sufficient assurance of this restoration, made to our guilty progenitors, was the basis, on which the church of God was early erected. The redemption of Christ, revealed in the gospel, has perfectly fulfilled and illuminated this antient prediction. The doctrine of redemption, therefore, by a crucified yet victorious Savior, is eminently the faith and glory of the gospel church. This doctrine, viewed in all its connexions, embraces the whole system of christian faith and practice. It holds up, in the most complete and impressiv light, the character and law of God ; the person, office, and benefits of Christ ; the ruin and recovery, the duty and destination of man.

It is one main excellence of christianity, that all its parts, however various, meet in one connected and beautiful system. Its doctrines are mutually and closely related. Its practical precepts are intimately united with each

each other, and immediately grow out of its doctrines ; while its peculiar ceremonies are lively representations and enforcements of both. Thus the doctrines of human depravity and misery, and of salvation by the mercy of God, the atonement of Christ, and the sanctification of the Spirit, directly illustrate and confirm each other, and compose one harmonious scheme of truth. From these combined truths immediately result the duties of evangelical repentance and humility, faith and hope, gratitude and love, obedience and joy.—While a cordial belief of the doctrines produces a fervent practice of the corresponding duties ; the acquisition or progress of one christian virtue assists the attainment or improvement of another. Love to God, gratitude to the Savior, and a pious imitation of both, beget and nourish christian kindness, meekness, and usefulness to our fellow men ; while both these kinds of virtue at once foster, and are promoted by that humility, self denial, and superiority to the present world, which the gospel enjoins.\*

Now

---

\* This connexion between the several branches of our religion, especially between its doctrines and duties, while it presents one distinguishing proof of its excellence and divinity, claims the unceasing and careful attention of its professors and teachers. The most lamentable errors and mischiefs have arisen from a disproportionate or exclusive zeal for certain parts of christianity, detached from the system at large. This has frequently led one description of its votaries to magnify orthodox opinion at the expense of a gospel temper, to make faith swallow up charity, good feelings supplant good works, yea an ungracious, malignant zeal for the doctrines of grace to blast the genuine spirit and fruit of these very doctrines ! It has led some to lay that stress on the appendages, which is due only to the substance of religion ; to confine their heads and hearts within a small circle of favorite speculations,

Now since these speculative and practical principles form a consistent and excellent plan ; since they give the highest glory to God, and the greatest comfort and perfection to man ; it follows that the open avowal and propagation by them by the church, must clothe her with singular beauty and dignity. They present her to view as embracing the noblest truths, and promoting the best of causes ; as courageously adhering to, and even glorying in those doctrines, which to a proud and depraved

---

speculations, expressions and sounds ; and to suspect, yea positively condemn, as an ignorant or unconverted heretic, every christian brother or preacher, who steps over this circle. But such persons should remember that as christian divinity is one regular and immense whole, so each part has its claim on the evangelic Instructor ; that by duly attending to any one branch, he really befriends and enforces all the rest, as connected with it ; that he cannot declare the whole counsel of God, if his discourses be limited to a few darling topics ; that he cannot do justice even to the doctrinal part of the gospel, without largely explaining and urging its corresponding precepts ; and finally, that it would be as absurd to charge him with making light of certain truths, merely because he does not interweave them with every sermon, as to infer that the compilers of the Westminster Catechism did not believe in the depravity of man or the satisfaction of Christ, because they do not notice them in every answer, but expressly mention each, only in one answer out of an hundred and nine !

To avoid this disgraceful and pernicious extreme, another class of believers seem fond of considering christianity merely as a *moral or practical* system, enforced by the assurance of a future state. They consider virtue as the end and sum of the gospel ; and think the practice of it sufficiently secured by the precepts of our religion, which enjoin, under so awful a sanction, the highest moral attainments. But this extreme, though more refined, is perhaps equally dangerous with the former. It equally separates what God and the nature of the thing have joined together. While it extols christian precepts, it strips them of their main light and life



depraved world are a stumbling block and foolishness ; and which in all ages have drawn upon her the persecuting scorn and malignity of open or practical infidels. The continued possession and exhibition of these heavenly truths, especially in such circumstances, encircle the gospel Zion with a celestial radiance. They cause her, like the inhabitants of Goshen, to dwell in a region of light, while the rest of the world is covered with darkness.

## SECONDLY,

life and force. Though we grant that these precepts set before us a sublime pitch of virtue, we insist that the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and those only, direct and oblige, encourage and enable us to practise it ; and that if these were set aside, the leading duties enjoined would have no obligation nor meaning. It is generally agreed that christian duty may be summed up in love to God, to Jesus Christ, and our fellow men. But this love neither is nor can be excited merely by the precepts enjoining it ; but it is produced and nourished by a cordial belief of those doctrines, which hold up the proper objects and incitements of it, or which exhibit the true character and relations of God, of Jesus Christ, of our human and christian brethren. While these doctrines make us see and feel our corresponding obligations, they present motives which constrain us to fulfil them, and convey those divine influences, comforts, and hopes, which render our obedience not only practicable, but fervent and delightful. They also give to our moral obedience a new and evangelical complexion, by connecting it with a deep impression of our ruin by sin and recovery by grace, by inspiring it with a proper respect to the revealed holiness and mercy of God, to the wonderful mediation and example of the Redeemer, and to the promised succours of his Holy Spirit. Is it not evident that christian piety and morality must rise or fall, as these principles, which support and exalt them, are regarded or neglected ?——Those who would see, in a full and convincing light, the important influence of these truths on practical religion, are referred to EVANS on *the christian temper*, or to WILBERFORCE'S *practical view*, &c.

SECONDLY, the christian church is beautiful in her GOVERNMENT or discipline. Her polity, if I may so speak, combines the energy of monarchy with the highest enjoyment of liberty. She is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. THE SON OF GOD, who possesses a divine fulness of wisdom and power, of justice and goodness, is her anointed Sovereign ; whose perfect character stamps all his laws and proceedings with invariable rectitude and beneficence, and secures the greatest happiness and glory of his empire, and of every faithful subject. The laws of this King are summed up in LOVE ; that love, which devotes each citizen of Zion to the highest good of the community. This law of benevolence, like that of gravitation in nature, by adding harmony to variety, constitutes the beauty and felicity of the church. Every open neglect or violation of this law by any of her members, every instance of conduct unfriendly to her purity, honor, or peace, is a proper object of that *ecclesiastical discipline*, which Christ has established. Such discipline is equally necessary and beautiful. It is enjoined, not only by the christian Lawgiver, but by the sacred voice of charity ; which requires us to seek the reformation of offenders, and the general welfare of Christ's kingdom, by admonishing or rejecting disorderly and scandalous members. In this way the church is purged of its dross, and made to shine with a purer lustre.

The government of the christian church derives still farther beauty from the free and generous principles, which pervade its original constitution and regular administration. Though it be in some degree a theocracy, as its form was instituted, and its first ministers appointed by Christ himself ; yet the New Testament clearly  
authorizes

authorizes the brethren at large to choose their ordinary teachers and other requisite officers, and, in conjunction with them, to manage all their governmental concerns. A spirit of brotherly union and equality strongly marks the principles and manners of the primitive church. The apostle represents all her members like those of the human body, as intimately connected with, and mutually dependent on each other ; as having a common sympathy and care for one another, and for the whole ; inasmuch that the highest and most important members need, and should thankfully accept the co-operation of the meanest. Agreeably, the laws of this kingdom uniformly inculcate a spirit of mutual condescension, of rational candor and freedom. They forbid every encroachment on the rights, every invasion of the consciences even of the weakest believers. They prohibit christians either from assuming or submitting to lordly domination, and make it their sacred duty, as well as privilege, to “ stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made them free.”

Thus the church, by establishing the joint reign of liberty and order, of charity and purity, and by securing these blessings under the protecting and fostering influence of an Almighty King, presents a matchless spectacle of beauty and glory.

THIRDLY, the WORSHIP of Zion is beautiful. Even the retired homage, paid by a devout individual to his glorious and beneficent Creator, is a most rational and noble employment. It implies and promotes a beautiful harmony of mind and conduct, with the character and relations both of God and of man. The lovely nature and effects of devotion are unspeakably heightened, when a large number of dependent and social beings

beings assist in the oblation ; when they render to God and religion their united and public honors, and strengthen their pious and benevolent affections by the force of mutual sympathy and example. How proper and beautiful is it for men, and especially for christians, who are linked together by so many ties, to associate for the purposes of piety, which constitutes the first of human duties and enjoyments ! Such devout combinations are strongly dictated by the regards we owe to God and ourselves, to our fellow christians, and the surrounding world. Agreeably, nature and reason, as well as revelation, have ever taught mankind to set apart certain portions of time for the public offices of religion. The appointment of a weekly sabbath for this end is coeval with creation. It held a distinguished place in the moral, as well as ritual, code of the Jewish church. The christian LORD'S DAY stands on the same general ground, and is recommended by new and very affecting considerations.

How lovely and venerable is that gospel worship, which publicly celebrates the wonders of creation and redemption ; which proclaims and enlivens our thankful devotion to their glorious and benevolent Author ; which aids the spiritual intercourse of believers with their absent Lord, and their holy fellowship with each other ; and thus trains them up for the perfect worship and society of Heaven ! How pleasing and improving to every good understanding and heart must be the religious observation of that Day, on which the great Founder of our faith arose from the dead, confirmed the divinity of his character and the fulness of his atoning merit, abolished death and the grave, subverted the empire of Satan, confounded the devices and hopes of

F his

his enemies, sealed the future resurrection and triumph of his friends, and laid the sure foundation of a glorious and everlasting kingdom of righteousness and joy ! How amiable and delightful are those peculiar christian ORDINANCES, which, in a simple and easy, yet rational and significant manner, bring home to our minds the great facts and benefits of the gospel, and confirm our correspondent duties and engagements ! How beautiful and animating are those united prayers, confessions, and praises, which the children of Zion present to their God and Redeemer in his sanctuary ! How excellent is the institution of the EVANGELICAL MINISTRY, of learned and faithful christian instructors ; who explain to our understandings, and enforce upon our hearts, those divine truths and precepts, which, under the promised influences of the Holy Spirit, make us wise, good, and happy, both for this world and the next !

What singular lustre do the services of the christian temple derive from a comparison with the antient Jewish worship ! The ceremonies of the latter were numerous, obscure, and burdensome ; the former are few, expressive, and spiritual. 'Those were comparatively "weak and beggarly elements," the rigid and painful discipline of "a school-master," adapted to rude and untoward children : *these* are liberal and manly exercises, suited to the more refined and mature state of the church. They are "spirit and life ;" they quicken and nourish our souls, without dazzling our senses, terrifying our imaginations, or exhausting our bodies.

At the same time, these improving services combine the powerful charms of *order* and *variety*. The well conducted worship of a christian society, attending the several public offices of their religion, exhibits a picture  
of

of simple decorum, refreshing diversity, and delightful correspondence. The beauty of this spectacle is thus forcibly described by Dr. Watts, in his paraphrase on this psalm—

Let strangers walk around the city where we dwell ;  
 Compass and view thine holy ground, and mark the building well ;  
 The order of thy house, the worship of thy court,  
 The cheerful songs, the solemn vows ; and make a fair report.  
 How decent and how wise ! how glorious to behold !  
 Beyond the pomp which charms the eyes, or rites adorn'd with  
 gold ! \*

FOURTHLY, the gospel church, acting in character, is beautiful in her MANNERS. Her amiable virtues, like a bright mirror, exhibit the genuine spirit of her profession, and the happy influence of her doctrines and institutions. As the churches of Christ are called holy, on account of their visible separation from the world and consecration to God, and the eminent expressions, motives, and means of sanctity, which their calling implies ; so real and exemplary holiness should be their constant livery, their great and unceasing pursuit.—They should feel themselves selected, and placed “as a city on a hill,” on purpose to show mankind the nature and beauty of christian virtue. They should view themselves as “golden candlesticks,” intended to contain and widely diffuse the light of evangelical holiness. HOLINESS TO THE LORD ought therefore to be conspicuously engraven on their foreheads ; it “should be written on their heads, their hearts, their lips, their hands, and all their possessions.” By their good conversation they should mark out and recommend to all beholders the way to heaven ; and thus become “the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.” On the one hand, they should

---

\* These verses are originally in short metre, two lines of which make one of the above.

should evince, by their example, that the christian spirit, far from renouncing or disparaging, cherishes and improves the amiable connexions, duties, and enjoyments of domestic and civil society ; that it renders men better and happier, as citizens of the present world. On the other side, they should hold out experimental proof, that the leading principles, objects, and manners of the children of Zion are essentially different from those of the world ; that christians, as such, are subjects, not of an earthly, but of a heavenly kingdom ; that the service, approbation, and final enjoyment of their divine King constitute their great employment and felicity. Without this open and practical display of the christian temper, a society of professed believers contradicts and defeats its own faith, government, and worship ; it exposes itself and the cause of religion to public contempt.

But how alluring is the aspect of a gospel church, when arrayed in all the beauties of holiness ; when the image of God, of Jesus Christ, and of Heaven, conspicuously shines forth in the practice of her members ! Such a church is well represented by a woman CLOTHED WITH THE SUN. She appears comely by a participation of the divine beauty. She resembles “the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” While a church of this description eminently honors her Lord, his moral perfections and laws, by exhibiting a fair copy of each ; she greatly recommends her own character and profession, and spreads the faith and love of the gospel in the surrounding world.

The loveliness of a christian society, acting agreeably to its profession, is heightened by this circumstance, that amiableness is eminently characteristic of the gospel spirit.



rit. Our religion is remarkable for enforcing the gentle and useful, rather than the splendid and glaring virtues. It aims to soften our hearts into tenderness and sympathy, patience and forgiveness, and at the same time exalt them to the noblest efforts of active, extended, unwearied beneficence. It gives due direction and nourishment, energy and perseverance to natural sweetness, generosity, or activity of spirit; while it radically, though perhaps not perfectly, changes such dispositions and habits, as are rough and unsocial, sluggish or malignant. Thus it imparts to its votaries the soul and the substance of amiable sentiments and manners; which surround them with a beauty unspeakably more real and impressive, than nature and art, without christianity, can possibly bestow.

How pleasing is that society, whose conduct breathes nothing but “love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance”! What beauty and dignity appeared in the primitive church; when her ministers and members glowed with the spirit of mingled piety and charity; when the cares, services, and even worldly goods of each individual were cheerfully devoted to the relief and benefit of the whole body; when mutual and general edification was the undivided object of pursuit, and center of union! Surely every person of a sound understanding and moral taste must be charmed with their history, as thousands then were with beholding the original. Let me recite to you one specimen of their amiable manners, and of the effect produced on surrounding spectators. The sacred historian tells us, that “the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; that none of them called any thing which he possessed his own; that they



they all continued together, and had all things common ;\* that they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every one had need ; that they remained stedfast in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers ; that continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and visiting from house to house, they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart ; praising God, and having favor with all the people ; and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." When we read this account, we do not wonder that the persons and the religion of these early christians were objects of general admiration ; and that the charm of their piety and goodness, under the divine blessing, allured multitudes to join themselves to their communion.

The same beauty of holiness adorned, in a good degree, the first settlers of New-England. What ardor for civil and sacred liberty, what noble sacrifices, labors, and sufferings in the cause of humanity and religion, distinguished these heroic adventurers ! They were not, indeed, wholly free from that spirit of superstition, enthusiasm,

---

\* When we commend that community of goods, which the primitive believers adopted, we mean to praise that disinterested, fraternal, and public affection, which dictated this measure, and rendered it, in their peculiar situation, as convenient and safe, as it was honorable. We also admire that benevolent and pious spirit, which prompted our Fathers to copy this early christian pattern. But we think they erred in rigidly adhering to this, as the standard of their common and civil transactions. Their entire community of worldly property, though nobly intended, did not well accord either with the propensity of individuals, or the happiness of civil society ; and accordingly, after producing many serious evils, gave place to a more wise and equally christian policy. See Belknap's Biography, vol. ii. p. 270, &c.

thusiasm, and intolerance, which then pervaded the christian world. But, as an eminent and truly liberal writer observes,\* “ their religious enthusiasm, considering the principles, on which it was founded, and the ends, to which it was directed, far from being a reproach, was greatly to their honor. For no great enterprize for the honor and happiness of mankind was ever achieved without a large mixture of that noble infirmity.” He adds, “ their imperfections were as few as any mortals have discovered ; and their civil policy was founded on wise and benevolent principles, on revelation and reason.” It is peculiarly pertinent to subjoin, that their ecclesiastical and religious history is, *in general*, a beautiful display of primitive christianity, with respect to doctrine and worship, to discipline and practice.

Their DOCTRINE equally magnified the riches of divine grace, and the authority of the divine law. While it asserted the holiness of God and the depravity of man, divine sovereignty and human dependence, justification by the atonement of Christ, and sanctification by the energy of his Spirit ; it also required and encouraged the exercise of faith and repentance, with a diligent use of appointed means, on the part of the sinner. Accordingly, the piety of our Fathers was strongly marked with a spirit both of humble reliance and dutiful activity.—While their places and modes of WORSHIP were strangers to that earthly pomp, and those artificial incentives to devotion, which nourish a carnal and superstitious spirit ; they observed every christian ordinance with a plainness and decency, a strictness and fervor, which suit the worship of Him, who is a Spirit, and claims to be worshipped in spirit and truth.

Their

---

\* Mr. (now President) ADAMS, on the Canon and Feudal Law.

Their ecclesiastical GOVERNMENT united liberty with order. It secured to the brotherhood of each church the privilege of choosing its own officers, of admitting and censuring its own members, and of regulating, in conjunction with its elders, all its internal concerns. At the same time it surrounded this liberty with powerful checks, in the mutual dependence and responsibility of the several churches ; in the due authority and influence of pastors and councils ; in the strict rules and vigilant spirit, which guarded the general conduct of each church, and which especially superintended the admission and behavior of its several members.—As the result and crown of all, the MANNERS of our ancestors strongly exhibited a spirit of humility and brotherly love, of simplicity and diligence, of justice and philanthropy, of fortitude and self denial, of fervent yet rational piety. Many of them were eminent patterns not only of christian devotion, but of all the personal and social virtues. Their first magistrates and politicians were at the same time ornaments and pillars of the church. Their civil and christian professions mutually supported and adorned each other. While their political or literary eminence added lustre to the church of Christ ; their religion gave peculiar force and beauty to their civil character and measures.

How beautiful was the spectacle in those early days, to see governors and great men not only mingling with the lowest of their brethren at the table of the Lord, but when necessity required, leading the public devotions, and administering to the public instruction of religious assemblies ! How pleasing to see their uniform condescension, integrity, and kindness, both towards their own people, and the surrounding natives ! How lovely

lovely did our Zion appear, when composed of such members !

Let us, my brethren, studiously copy these excellent principles and manners. Let the first characters for science, wealth, and station, in imitation of their illustrious Predecessors, esteem it their greatest honor to be professors and patrons of vital christianity. Let all ranks, ages, and sexes in this place join their best endeavors and prayers with those of their new Pastor, in building up this famous and venerable part of Mount Zion. Let this be their united supplication—RETURN, WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS ; LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD, AND VISIT THIS VINE ; AND THE VINEYARD WHICH THY RIGHT HAND HATH PLANTED, AND THIS BRANCH, WHICH THOU MADEST STRONG FOR THYSELF. O SATISFY US EARLY WITH THY MERCY, THAT WE MAY REJOICE AND BE GLAD ALL OUR DAYS. LET THY WORK APPEAR TO THY SERVANTS, AND THY GLORY TO THEIR CHILDREN ; AND LET THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD OUR GOD BE UPON US. OF OUR ZION MAY IT STILL BE SAID, THIS AND THAT MAN WAS BORN IN HER ; AND MAY THE HIGHEST HIMSELF ESTABLISH HER.



---

---

## Sermon II.

---

---

### PSALM XLVIII. 2.

---

**H**AVING considered the church as BEAUTIFUL FOR SITUATION, we are now to contemplate her as THE JOY OF THE WHOLE EARTH.

This representation may import, that the church is the delight and glory of our world on account of her superior beauty and value ; that she is eminently the seat of joy ; and the source of transcendent good to mankind.

FIRST, Zion is the joy of the earth on account of her beauty and value. As the spiritual world is far more excellent than the material ; so the moral beauty and worth of Christ's kingdom unspeakably transcend the natural order and magnificence of the visible creation. One sanctified and immortal mind possesses more true glory, reflects greater honor on its Maker, and of course presents a nobler object of complacency, than the whole system of inferior beings ; yea, than the highest possible rank or number of intelligent creatures, if strangers to the beauty of holiness. Since then the church of Christ, viewed in its largest extent, contains innumerable millions of rational beings, redeemed by a plan

plan of grace, which advances to the highest pitch the glory of God in their recovered holiness and bliss ; it may well be styled the ornament and delight of the whole earth. The beauties and treasures of this world are material, unsatisfying, and perishing ; but those of the church are spiritual and divine, substantial and unfading. If the addition of one penitent soul to the kingdom of Christ creates new joy even in heaven ; if the manifold wisdom of God, displayed towards Zion, engages the enraptured attention of celestial principalities and powers ; if the whole frame of inanimate nature is earnestly invited to exult and sing praise for the work of redemption ; what a peculiar call have the inhabitants of the earth, for whom this redemption was wrought, to celebrate its honors, and rejoice in its benefits ! What reason have they to glory in the church, which publishes, exemplifies, and carries forward this great work of divine benevolence !

SECONDLY, Zion is eminently the *seat* of joy. It concentrates all the springs of human gladness. While it excludes, alleviates, or sanctifies every sorrow ; it admits and unspeakably heightens every innocent entertainment. It also confers a set of peculiar and sublime pleasures ; the pleasures of christian contemplation and faith, charity and hope ; the delights of social worship, brotherly intercourse, and a joint participation in the inestimable privileges, virtues, and consolations of the gospel. By these divine enjoyments the church on earth has an anticipated fellowship with “ the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven.” In short, a society of christians, feeling and acting in character, is the most joyful community on earth. Far from being, as many suppose,

the

the abode of gloom and austerity, the church imbosoms all the real and manly joy in the world.

THIRDLY, Zion is the joy of the whole earth, on account of the immense advantages which it imparts to mankind. The church, when first erected in the family of Adam, and afterward in that of Noah, was eminently the light and solace of the world. It shielded the whole earth from immediate destruction. It introduced a new order of things, the happy effects of which were ultimately to embrace all nations of men. It gave hope, repentance, and peace to the first guilty pair, who represented, and then formed the whole human kind. It secured to the last named Patriarch and his seed, the founders of the new world, the gracious covenant and benediction of God. It gave birth, preservation, and publicity to a long series of revelations and providential facts, admirably fitted for the general instruction and improvement of mankind. Among these may be eminently ranked the divine conduct towards Abraham and his Hebrew posterity, in selecting them from the mass of the world, and placing them in the center of the inhabited globe, to be the trustees and propagators of the true religion, and thus an eventual blessing to all nations.

The light, thus early set up in the church of God, reflected many salutary, though feeble rays upon antient heathen countries. Both reason and history assure us that the world is indebted to the church for its best notions of theology, of ethics, of laws, of art and science in general ; and even for the first principle of universal knowledge, I mean, the doctrine of ONE INFINITELY PERFECT SPIRIT, the Cause and Support of all other beings. The Eastern world, where Moses has placed the

the

the patriarchal and Jewish church, was certainly the original seat and fountain of knowledge, whence the most celebrated philosophers and legislators confessedly derived their best sentiments and institutions. It is notorious, that those portions of mankind, which, in respect to time and place, have lived nearest to the scene of divine revelation, have in general proportionally excelled in valuable information and refinement, especially in just ideas of religion and morals. All the antiquities, particularly the religious history of the pagan world, point to the revelations and facts of the Old Testament, as their true and adequate source. As the striking mixture of truth and excellence, which pervaded the systems of antient heathens, was evidently borrowed from the church ; so the fabulous and absurd parts of their theology appears to be the degenerate offspring or imitation of her doctrine and worship.\*

In

---

\* To illustrate and confirm the above sentiments, we subjoin the following observations.—God's promise to Adam, and covenant with Noah, were two instances of an early and *universal revelation*. They were also attended and followed by circumstances, which tended to secure their general and permanent influence. The longevity of these distinguished men, in connexion with that of intermediate Patriarchs ; the peculiar relation of these two to the rest of the species, with the very interesting facts and discoveries they had to relate ; the account of the creation, the fall, and the deluge, given by Moses, tending to impress the human mind with sublime, awful, and amiable views of God, and with a holy dread and abhorrence of sin ; the further checks given to wickedness by the confusion of languages, the dispersion of mankind, and the abbreviation of human life ; the extraordinary appearances of Jehovah to and for the person and descendants of Abraham ; the uncommon removes of his family ; the train of wonderful providences to the Hebrew nation, from their settlement in Egypt

to



In this view, what multiplied and inestimable benefits has the world at large derived from the church !

From

---

to the coming of their Messiah ; the eminent obligations and advantages, furnished by their religion, for promoting the knowledge and service of the true God, both among themselves and the neighbouring gentiles ; the captivities of Israel and Judah in Assyria and Babylon ; the rise of the Samaritan religion ; the translation and consequent dispersion of the Jewish Scriptures ; these and similar events must have produced extensive benefit to the heathen, as well as Jewish world, and probably afforded to both the best moral and religious advantages, which their other existing circumstances would admit.

This rational deduction is supported by authentic history ; which assures us that the antient Egyptians and Arabians, Assyrians and Persians, and even the earliest Greeks and Romans, worshipped ONE SUPREME BEING, and had no trace either of polytheism or idolatry. That this pure belief and worship were suggested by early supernatural revelation, is proved—1. by St. Paul's declaration, that "the world by wisdom," or mere human reason, "knew not God." 2. This prime article of religion has in fact subsisted in greater clearness and purity in some ruder tribes of men, than in very scientific and polished nations.—3. Gentile philosophy and learning, instead of adding light and support to this doctrine, gradually corrupted and destroyed it. 4. The greatest energies and improvements of unaided reason have generally landed men in religious scepticism, or absolute atheism ; or left them in the grossest idolatry and vice. 5. Those few pagan philosophers, who believed in ONE INFINITE MIND, borrowed this sentiment, by their own acknowledgment, from eastern tradition. Indeed, they could not derive it from argumentation ; for whenever they reason from visible effects, they always infer a plurality of causes. Whenever they speak of a providence, or of religious worship, they refer the one and the other to a multiplicity of gods.—If their own wisdom could not fully direct and establish them in the first principle of natural religion ; much less could it assure divine pardon and succour, and future everlasting happiness, to conscious guilt and depravity, or even to sincere but defective virtue.—What striking proof do these facts and considerations

From her mankind have received those religious and moral principles, which are the source of human dignity

---

ations afford, that all the genuine religious knowledge, virtue, and comfort, which have ever blessed our fallen race, have flowed from a supernatural source ; that the church of God, introduced and supported by an extraordinary interposition, is “the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.”

That the fabulous additions, which the heathens gradually made to the primitive theology, were the corrupt offspring of early revelation, appears from the following authenticated facts ; —that these abuses grew up *by degree* — that they originally rested on the belief of one superior Deity, to whom they joined subordinate and mediatorial divinities ; that they aimed to propitiate this Sovereign Power by animal sacrifices ; and taught the frequency of divine communications. Now each of these particulars is a manifest imitation of the previously established doctrine and worship of the Patriarchal and Jewish church ; which acknowledged one Supreme God, and believed in a great Mediator, and in the subordinate ministration of invisible angelic beings ; which offered animal sacrifices to the Most High, and received frequent and special discoveries of his presence and will. These real discoveries, made to the church, gave rise to the bold pretence and easy belief of similar inspirations in the pagan world. The frequent and undeniable existence of the former had conquered the great reluctance of the human mind to credit such extraordinary facts ; which reluctance strongly appears in the incredulity of the present age.—Thus men, in early times, were prepared too readily to admit the supernatural pretensions of heathen law-givers, heroes, and priests. At the same time, that portion of truth and excellence, which their religious, moral, and political institutions had borrowed from early revelation or consequent tradition, gave to those institutions an easy currency, and in many respects a salutary influence.—Thus many things in the history of the world, which have been thought to disparage the Bible and the Church, add greatly to the credit and glory of both.

Many of the above particulars are placed in a very full and convincing light, by HARTLEY on man, LELAND and CAMPBELL on the necessity of revelation, and DWIGHT on infidel philosophy.

nity and comfort ; which restrain from evil, and incite to good ; which give being and stability to individual virtue and national happiness ; which, in one word, form the main distinction between the man and the brute. Charity would incline us to believe that the traditional notices of truth and duty, derived from antient revelations, however imperfect or adulterated, might not only contribute to social order and happiness among Gentile nations, but, under the secret influence of divine grace, form many individuals to real virtue and piety ; and thus render them true, though invisible members of Zion, and heirs of everlasting felicity.

But since true religion and morality, notwithstanding the early and successive methods employed for their preservation, were gradually extinguished by human depravity, both among Jews and Heathens ; it became expedient to introduce a more perfect and general exhibition of divine truth and grace. For this purpose, that GLORIOUS PERSON, whose predicted atonement was the foundation and hope of the antient church, and whose frequent visible appearances and stated administration had been her light and support, came at the appointed time, and took up his residence in our nature and world. The intelligence of his birth was justly announced by the angel, as GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY TO ALL PEOPLE. For he came to publish to an insolvent world THE YE. OF JUBILEE, THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD. HE WAS ANOINTED TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR, TO BIND UP THE BROKEN HEARTED, TO PROCLAIM LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES, THE RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, THE OPENING OF THE PRISON TO THEM THAT ARE BRUISED ; AND TO GIVE BEAUTY, JOY, AND THE

H

GARMENT

**GARMENT OF PRAISE TO THE MOURNERS IN ZION.**  
 The gospel church, founded by Christ and his Apostles, publishes and maintains in the world a complete view of natural religion. It also proclaims a supernatural scheme of truth and duty, intended to embrace, to harmonize, and bless all the families of the earth ; a scheme which, accompanied by the promised grace of its Author, gives light to the mind, relief to the conscience, rectitude to the will, order to the passions, virtue to the conduct, and eternal life to the soul. We have abundant historical evidence, that this gracious dispensation, in its early periods, exalted human nature from the depths of ignorance, superstition, and vice, to high degrees of rational piety, virtue, and joy ; that it formed its subjects not only to eminent sobriety, charity, and devotion in their ordinary behavior, but to unexampled patience and meekness, fortitude and triumph, amid the severest persecutions and trials. In every stage of its existence, has the christian church improved the condition of the world. While it has directly promoted the moral beauty and happiness of its members, it has indirectly meliorated the character and state even of some mahometan and pagan countries. While it has rendered millions of christian individuals, especially in private and domestic life, steadily good, useful, and happy ; it has greatly improved all the valuable interests of christian communities. It has diffused among them religious sentiments and moral restraints. It has excited and aided useful inquiries and pursuit. It has appretiated the rights, and enforced the duties of rulers and subjects. It has subdued those passions, which injure social liberty and order, and cherished those which are friendly to both. It has strengthened the ties, and  
 nourished

nourished the spirit of humanity and kindness, of gratitude and fidelity between the several classes of society. By its presence and influence, its virtues and prayers, it has suspended the judgments, and drawn down the blessings of Heaven on the surrounding world.

Do any ask ; if the benevolent Founder of the church intended it to be the joy of the whole earth, why has it been the instrument of so much strife and persecution, wickedness and misery ? We reply, these evils are only the accidental, not the natural effects of christian principles. They originate in those corrupt affections, which these principles aim to subdue. If the gospel had no existence, these vicious passions would ever find some pretence for exerting their fury. The real, and even pretended evils, occasioned by christianity, bear no proportion to those, which have confessedly issued from human depravity, uncontrolled by this institution. Yea, infidelity itself, notwithstanding its boasted liberality and benevolence, can be far more superstitious and fanatical, cruel and destructive, than the highest degree of religious enthusiasm or ecclesiastical bigotry.

Do any farther inquire, why the gospel Zion, which was erected for the general good of mankind, has not been universally extended, or produced a more certain and happy effect ? We answer, this divine constitution, like every other salutary provision, though well adapted to its end, may be partially obstructed, and even perverted to evil, by human folly and wickedness. Had the advantages, afforded by christianity, been fully improved, it would probably long since have pervaded and sanctified the world. But its evidence and doctrine, like those of natural religion, are wisely fitted to try and discriminate characters ; and while they convince  
and

and subdue, comfort and save the humble, serious, and diligent ; they justly and necessarily produce an opposite effect upon the careless, the proud, and licentious. Besides, as God was not bound to bestow on all his creatures, or even upon all men, the same capacities, means, and degrees of happiness ; as different grades of perfection seem requisite to the highest beauty and happiness of the universe ; it might be best on the whole, that one portion of our race should, at least for a time, be exalted above the rest by enjoying the sublime dispensation of the gospel. A long period of time, after the first establishment of the christian church, might also be necessary to prepare mankind at large for the due reception and full effect of this institution ; just as four thousand years, after the first promise of a Savior, were wisely employed in preparing the world for his appearance. Perhaps too the spiritual and exalted genius of our religion is not immediately suited to the low sphere of the Hottentot, and some other rude tribes ; any more than the refinements of philosophy are fitted to the taste, capacity, and situation of vulgar christians. At least, the plan of divine wisdom may require a certain pitch of civilization, preparatory to the still higher privileges of christianity. Those unenlightened barbarians will also in due time undoubtedly receive these previous advantages, as well as the subsequent blessings of the gospel, from that part of the world, which already enjoys the christian dispensation. Thus the church of Christ will, in every view, become the joy and praise of the whole earth.

These observations seem fully warranted by scriptural prophecy, compared with the present tendencies of providence. The uncommon convulsions and revolutions

tions of this eventful period ; the remarkable intimacy now forming between christian and mahometan powers, and their mighty combination against infidel philosophy and despotism ; the rapidly spreading commerce of enlightened nations, and the consequent singular advantages for diffusing knowledge, refinement, and christianity through the globe ; the unusual and promising efforts of some gospelized countries to extend these blessings to distant heathens ; these and many other corresponding events announce the near approach of that period, when the gospel church, like a sacred leaven, shall penetrate the whole lump of mankind, and thus render the earth one great abode of righteousness and joy.

The state of things, in this expected period, will completely verify the description of our text. **ZION WILL THEN AWAKE AND PUT ON STRENGTH, AND SHINE WITH THE GLORY OF THE LORD ARISEN UPON HER. THE GENTILES SHALL COME TO HER LIGHT, AND KINGS TO THE BRIGHTNESS OF HER RISING.** The pure lustre of her doctrines, institutions, and manners, and their benign influence on the general condition of man, shall exhibit the most convincing and delightful proof of her heavenly nature and original. Under her auspices, rulers and nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and be cemented into one glorious and happy fraternity. This holy community shall enjoy the special patronage of the **GREAT KING.** It shall triumph in his equally powerful, wise, and beneficent administration. The brutal and even insensible creation shall also be rescued from that unnatural and wretched bondage, to which it is subjected by the abuse of man and the curse of God. It shall be restored to its primitive perfection and use.

Thus



Thus the whole earth, with its numerous and diversified tenants, shall participate with man in the happy fruits of Messiah's reign.

But the glory and felicity of Zion will reach their destined perfection, at and after the day of judgment. Then the top stone of this mighty fabrick shall be laid. The enemies of the church shall then be finally subdued ; and all her faithful members, embracing probably a vast majority of mankind, shall be gathered into one spotless assembly, and shall at once adorn and participate the triumph of their victorious Leader. Then shall the Redeemer fully obtain the joy set before him ; he shall be perfectly glorified in his saints, and his Father glorified in Him. Then shall the golden age of the world be eminently restored. The new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall spring up from the ruins of the old. The spiritual creation, planned in the councils of eternity, and gradually reared up in the successive ages of time, shall receive the finishing hand of its Author. Then ALL THE RANSOMED OF THE LORD SHALL COME TO THE HEAVENLY ZION WITH SONGS, AND EVERLASTING JOY UPON THEIR HEADS ; THEY SHALL OBTAIN JOY AND GLADNESS, AND ALL SORROW AND SIGHING SHALL FLEE AWAY. O blessed consummation ! What created mind can compute the sum total of good to man, of happiness to the universe, and of glory to God, resulting from this great work of saving love !

From this large survey of the church we deduce, in the FIRST PLACE, a strong proof of its divine original. We know that God is the author of visible nature, by the traces which it bears of his wisdom, power, and goodness. So the church, by exhibiting the footsteps  
or



or image of Deity, equally proclaims its divine Founder. The plan of this spiritual building, the selection, arrangement, and union of its materials and instruments, are a wonderful display of INFINITE WISDOM. Its preservation and progress through so many distant ages and countries, and amid such various, unceasing, and powerful efforts to destroy it, the eventual aid and success it has constantly derived even from these efforts, evince the protection of INFINITE POWER. The moral beauty and excellence impressed on the doctrines, institutions and manners of Zion, exhibit the PERFECT HOLINESS of its Framer. The exact correspondence of its general history, and the experience of each of its members, with the predictions, promises, and descriptions of the Bible, proclaim the divine origin of both, as well as the UNCHANGING TRUTH AND FAITHFULNESS of their Author. The beneficent design and tendency of the whole scheme, its past, present, and expected happy effects, announce it as the offspring of INFINITE LOVE.

Could the penmen of the Old and New Testament, if uninspired, have originated a plan so great and so good, as their writings unfold? Could they have made all parts of their writings, which were penned in so many different ages, concur in this design? Could they have opened to us a system of divine dispensations, both past and future, meeting in the same point? Could they have certainly foreseen a long train of distant futurities, and have made them completely subservient to a preconcerted scheme of imposture? Could human weakness or wickedness give birth, support, and effect to a regular and undeviating effort to reform and save a degenerate world? Could they exactly foretell the various obstructions and final success of the attempt?—

If

If the church of Christ were founded in fraud or fanaticism, could it be the source of religious knowledge and goodness, of personal, domestic, and public happiness? Could it produce a series of such excellent characters, as are recorded in history? Could it originate the exalted sentiments and virtues of Abraham and Moses, of David and Paul; especially the perfect and transcendent character of JESUS CHRIST?—Certainly enthusiasm cannot make men sober and intelligent, candid and peaceable, prudent and beneficent; nor imposture render them true, disinterested, and faithful! Certainly a God of truth and rectitude would never honor deception, as the instrument of reforming and blessing mankind! These observations combine with a thousand others, to prove that the Bible and the Church are the offspring of God. Hence,

SECONDLY, let the friends of Zion be comforted and admonished by our subject, amid the present declensions of the church, and success of her adversaries. Let them derive fresh vigor and joy even from these events. For these gloomy circumstances are visibly accomplishing that great prophetic system, which assures us of the ultimate, yea speedy triumph of the christian cause. The dreadful fruits, which infidel and demoralizing principles are now producing, and the severe chastisement which they are providentially administering to christian communities, are probably intended by Heaven, as well as admirably fitted, to rouse and reform them; to unite them in a vigilant and successful opposition to the common enemy; to impress them with new arguments in favor of christianity, arising from the contrasted character, situation, and projects of its enemies and friends; and in fine, to induce the christian world, and perhaps mankind

mankind at large, to fly from irreligion and atheism, as from a mortal pestilence ; and to embrace the gospel, as the gift of divine benevolence, and the rock of human salvation. When we behold the King of Zion thus bending to his great designs the wrath of men and devils, thus advancing his own cause even by their most subtle and pernicious measures ; can we forbear the devout and rapturous exclamation, AMEN, ALLELUIA ; FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH ? In the darkest times, what reason have “ the children of Zion to be joyful in their King ! ”

While we thus rejoice in the divine patronage of the church ; let us, with pious humiliation and grief, lament her past and present declensions, which have marred her beauty, checked her progress, and diminished her salutary influence. Let us seriously attend to those lessons, which her existing circumstances suggest. Let us carefully investigate the causes of her present decline and danger, and the best means of her defence and prosperity. Let us repress, both in ourselves and others, that mental pride and levity ; that spirit of extreme liberality and restless innovation ; that inattention to the real nature and evidence of christianity ; that cold insensibility to its peculiar doctrines and precepts, and to the loud and repeated admonitions of divine providence ; that ardent devotion to the world ; that growing dissipation and licentiousness of character ; which are among the prominent features of the age ; and which, united with open infidelity and irreligion, threaten to swallow up the christian interest. As the best cure of these evils, let us all imbibe into our understandings and hearts the interesting discoveries and motives of the gospel. Let us, with united zeal and courage, rally

round the standard of a crucified Redeemer. Let us cling to the Lord's Day and its public solemnities, as the badge and support of christianity. Let us, by every prudent effort, seek to revive and exhibit that pure christian faith and worship, discipline and practice, which form the beauty of Zion; and render her the joy and praise of the whole earth. As a principal mean to these ends, let us ever maintain in our churches a learned, regular, and pious ministry. This leads us to infer,

In the **THIRD PLACE**, the leading qualifications and duties of the **MINISTERS** of Zion.\* Good natural abilities, improved by general knowledge, especially by a profound acquaintance with theology and ecclesiastical history, seem requisite to a distinct conception, a clear exposition, and a right application of those principles, which support, adorn, and edify the church of God. A true scriptural knowledge of the divine character and will is at once the food and ornament of Zion. It renders her a golden candlestick, a cheering lamp to our benighted world. Her ministers, therefore, should be public mirrors, collecting and exhibiting to mankind the full lustre of those truths, of which the church is the destined repository. If christian pastors are very deficient in general science; if they be superficial or erroneous

---

\* As these discourses were provisionally intended for an ordination sermon, there was a propriety in enlarging upon this inference. The feelings of the speaker towards the new Pastor and his flock urged him to deliver it. Their wish for its publication, and the author's desire to suggest to young theologians and preachers some useful hints, have induced him to give this part to the reader without any abridgment. He is happy in the belief, that the life and ministry of his reverend Brother, for whom these hints were especially prepared, will furnish a living exposition and enforcement of them.

wrong in their views of religion ; their pretended light is little better than darkness. They are blind leaders of the blind. They can neither defend the purity, nor support the honor, nor extend the interest of the Messiah's kingdom. In an age like the present, when so much wit and learning are systematically employed against our religion, its public defenders should be able to meet and conquer these assailants on their own ground. They should be qualified to show that almost all the objections against christianity take their rise, not from superior knowledge or true philosophy, but from an ignorant, vain, or corrupted mind. As stars in the firmament of Zion, they should diffuse the light of gospel truth to the best advantage, and the widest extent. They should aim to expound, enforce, and vindicate all parts of that great scheme, which the Bible and Providence are unfolding, and which the future events of eternity will consummate.

An employment so extensive and arduous requires a devout and critical study of the Scriptures. It requires a close attention to those publications and branches of knowledge, which fix the sense, confirm the truth, defend the propriety, or unfold the beauty of the sacred volume ; especially in those passages of it, whose meaning, justness, or excellence escapes the common eye. In this view, unspeakable benefit will accrue from a familiar acquaintance with those authors, who have published new discoveries respecting the manners and customs, the records and books of the eastern nations.—An extensive knowledge of *history* will give the preacher a just and striking picture of human nature and life, and a strong practical illustration of the necessity, meaning, and truth of the Bible. A knowledge of *ecclesiastical history*

history will help him to discriminate the primitive faith, worship, and manners from subsequent human inventions and abuses ; it will enable him to trace the sources, progress, and cure of these evils, and the most successful means of defending and promoting the christian interest. It will teach him gratefully to admire and humbly to imitate the wisdom and condescension of the King of Zion, and his faithful ministers of former ages, in suiting their applications to the different periods of the church, and to the various capacities and exigencies of mankind.—A practical knowledge of *men*, drawn from a judicious and pastoral intercourse with their several classes, will open to him the most direct avenues to their understandings and hearts ; and thus qualify him, under the divine blessing, to promote the best good of the high and the low, the learned and the ignorant, the sinner and the saint.—In a word, to state all the doctrines, duties, and sanctions of revealed religion in their proper order, relation, and importance ; to hold them up in a light so perspicuous and impressivè, as may best conduce to their proper and saving effect ; is the main duty of a christian instructor. This is a service unspeakably sublime and awful, laborious and difficult, yet equally pleasant and improving. It demands the utmost application of the head and heart, assisted by large measures of divine grace. This leads us to add, that

An *experimental* and *practical* acquaintance with the gospel is highly important to its ministers. This is emphatically the illuminating and vivifying spirit of their employment. It would require a volume to trace all the connexions of personal holiness with pastoral fidelity, comfort, and success. We can only observe that the virtuous character of ministers is essential to the beauty

beauty and prosperity of Zion, as it exhibits, recommends, and diffuses the christian spirit ; as it embodies the christian doctrine, and gives a visible form, a sensible and forcible illustration to its spiritual principles, its unseen and infinite realities. It also publicly displays that divine energy, which accompanies, and gives efficacy to these principles. Certainly those ministrations, which are a lively transcript of the speaker's heart, and which are conspicuously copied out in his life, must infinitely excel those, which have neither of these recommendations. The supernatural influence, exemplified in the godly preacher, lays a foundation for similar effects on the hearer. The divine power, attached to christianity, eminently attends it, when thus visibly substantiated and enforced ; when thus doubly preached, by the eloquence of character, confirming that of the lips.— Agreeably, the christian spirit, shining forth in professors and teachers, has ever been a principal mean of supporting and enlarging the Redeemer's kingdom. This signally contributed to the glorious success, which crowned the early preachers of the gospel. While the eminent piety, virtue, and joy, which they derived from their religion, operated as a public miracle in its favor ; their christian views and affections prompted the most active and effectual endeavours to extend its salutary influence. The same spirit and conduct in christian professors and teachers will, under the great Head of the church, produce similar effects in every age. Under the influence of this idea, let us, who are Members or Ministers of Zion, by our doctrine, temper, and life, continually recommend the religion of Christ, and force an infidel world to confess, “ that God is in us of a truth.”



BELOVED BRETHREN OF THIS CHURCH AND  
SOCIETY,

I rejoice with you, that the King of Zion has given you a new Pastor, whose views, I am persuaded, fully accord with the preceding observations. To be an Officer in the Messiah's kingdom, and an instrument of promoting its beauty and joy ; yea to contribute to the salvation of the meanest human soul ; is, in his esteem, a far nobler object, than the first rank in popular applause, scientific fame, or worldly prosperity. While he holds up the gospel as a vital and practical system, he will delight to unfold and recommend those doctrines of grace, which give life and nourishment to evangelical holiness. He will also aim to go before you in a temper and conduct becoming his profession, and thus to exemplify, adorn, and propagate the christian doctrine and spirit. If you heartily unite with him in this good work, you will have the pleasure and honor of preserving and transmitting those excellent principles and manners, which your Fathers brought into this wilderness.

What singular motives and examples of primitive christianity does your history place before you ! The *spot*, on which your Ancestors landed ; the *rock*, on which they first stepped their feet ; the *place*, which they devoted to public christian worship, and in which their children are this day assembled ; the *adjacent hill*, which preserves in its bosom their sacred relicks ; the numerous records and memorials of their virtue and piety, of their heroic actions and sufferings ; these possess a beauty and force of eloquence, which ought to reign forever over the hearts of their descendants, and  
hold



hold them fast to the great cause of liberty, order, and religion. The images of a CARVER, a BRADFORD, a WINSLOW, a BREWSTER, a CUSHMAN, and many contemporary and succeeding Worthies, seem to rise up before you ; to smile with complacency on the transaction of the last week ; and to conjure you and your new Minister to support that precious interest, to which they cheerfully devoted their all.

When you look back on the *past year*, what new incitements both to religious humiliation and thanksgiving rush on your minds ! On the one side you behold your late eloquent, fervent, and exemplary ROBBINS added to the venerable Dead. You feel yourselves called to unite with the other members of this Commonwealth in mourning the death, and imitating the virtues of our late pious and excellent SUMNER. You participate in the still more recent and extensive sorrow, occasioned by the sudden removal of that FIRST OF MEN, our admired WASHINGTON. Numbers of you, in the course of the last year, have also felt the arrows of private bereavement and distress. But in the midst of these judgments, how wonderfully has the God of your Fathers remembered mercy for this antient part of our Zion ! How distinguishing was his goodness in directing you, in the first instance, to the Man, whom he had chosen as the instrument of remarkably uniting your numerous Society ; in giving him liberty to come to you on the first Lord's day, in which you could hear a Candidate for the ministry ; in preparing your minds to elect him, at the moment when his employment at the University forbid his longer probation among you ; and finally, in crowning the first day of this new year with the gift of a new spiritual guide to you and your children, with-

in a few months after the death of his Predecessor ! In the view of this affecting train of events, I trust ~~that~~ you devoutly join with the speaker in exclaiming, THIS IS THE LORD'S DOING, AND IT IS MARVELLOUS IN OUR EYES.

While these auspicious events fill your hearts with gladness ; I must admonish you to rejoice with thankfulness, with sobriety, and with trembling. Remember that your new Pastor and yourselves are but imperfect and dying men ; and that death or some other contingency may soon blast your delightful expectations. While you justly respect and love his amiable qualities as a Man, his exemplary virtues as a Christian, and his sacred services as a Minister ; beware that you do not place him in God's stead ; that you do not rest your present or future happiness on his relation to you, on his prayers for and ministrations among you ; that you do not content yourselves with barely admiring his gifts, or even attending on his public instructions. Devoutly look to the King of Zion, whose servant and representative he is, to crown his labors with HIS effectual blessing. In prayerful dependence on this blessing, steadily co-operate with your Pastor, by religiously obeying the truths he inculcates, by watching over one another with christian affection, and by acting the part of faithful shepherds in your several families.

The late memorable day, which has commenced a new year, has likewise brought us to the threshold of a NEW CENTURY. What wonderful scenes has the closing century opened upon our country, upon Zion, upon the world ! During this period, what deliverance, security, and glory has our American Jerusalem derived from the presence and protection of the GREAT KING !

GOD

GOD HAS BEEN KNOWN IN HER PALACES FOR A REFUGE. FOR LO, THE KINGS AND TRIBES WERE ASSEMBLED ; THEY PASSED BY TOGETHER ; THEY SAW AND MARVELLED ; THEY WERE TROUBLED AND HASTED AWAY. THE HEATHEN AND PERFIDIOUS EUROPEAN RAGED AGAINST HER ; HE UTTERED HIS VOICE ; THE EARTH MELTED. AS WE HAVE HEARD FROM OUR FATHERS, SO HAVE WE SEEN IN THE CITY OF OUR GOD. WE HAVE THOUGHT OF THY LOVINGKINDNESS, O GOD, IN THE MIDST OF THY TEMPLE.—

The century before us seems reserved for events still more important to the church of God, and to the human family. As members of both, as the favored but degenerate offspring of a pious race, we are admonished by the present eventful crisis, to “remember from whence we are fallen, to repent and do our first works ;” to exert our best efforts and prayers, that our nation and posterity may be preserved from the sins and plagues of the antichristian world, and may largely participate in the expected glory and happiness of Zion. O let the existing and approaching vicissitudes of human affairs unite our hearts more firmly to that Being, who cannot change, and to that cause, which can never be overthrown. Let the convulsions, which now shake the globe, lead our minds forward to that final catastrophe, which will destroy every interest but that of christian piety, and every kingdom but that of the SON OF GOD. BEHOLD, HE COMETH WITH CLOUDS, AND EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM. The rending rocks, the trembling earth, the blazing world announce his approach. See rulers and subjects, ministers and people, standing on a level before his judgment seat. Then it will be found, that a hearty and practical compliance

K

with

with his gospel is the only qualification for the kingdom of heaven, is the only security from endless perdition.

Let those of you, who have hitherto refused this compliance, be persuaded by all that is holy in religion, by all that is solemn in eternity, to begin and spend this new year with a new system of feelings and conduct. Let me remind thee, O impenitent, delaying sinner, that the awful sentence, "this year thou shalt die," will doubtless be executed upon some one, at least, of this great congregation. The cheerful opening of this year has already been shaded by a sudden and afflictive bereavement in one of your families.\* If only one sinful creature in this audience is to die, during this annual period ; yea, if one only is to perish forever ; ought not the apprehension of an issue so dreadful to sober every mind ? Ought it not to rouse each of you to the anxious inquiry, "Lord, is it I ?" Ought it not to constrain you to begin this year with God ; to begin it in the exercise of gospel faith and repentance ; to improve every hour and moment of it in such a manner, as will insure a **HAPPY NEW YEAR**, and a **BLESSED ETERNITY** ?

---

\* After the above was delivered, a second valuable member of the Society, who had attended the morning exercise, was still more suddenly removed in the course of the ensuing night. May these providential warnings, in connexion with the preceding admonition, have their proper effect !

