AN ADDRESS
to
CHRISTIANS AND MINISTERS,
on
GOSPEL PERFECTION,
especially to such
as deny that state
to be attainable.

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An Address, &c.

Dear Brethren,

For some time I have felt a desire to address you upon the subject of Christian Perfection; but have been kept from doing it hitherto, by a sense of my want of ability for the work, and through fear I might injure the cause which I would fain promote. But as the subject has continued with increasing weight upon my mind, I have resolved to commit my thoughts to paper, and leave them to be disposed of as Infinite Wisdom shall see fit.

Before I come to the main subject of my address, I beg leave to make a few introductory remarks.

In casting our eyes over Protestant Christendom, (to say nothing of others) what multitudes do we behold, who are mere heathen in heart and life, having never professed religion, nor submitted to the first principles of Christianity: and what multitudes make a profession, without knowing anything of the power of religion; yea, and cry down experimental godliness and true piety, under the despicable names of enthusiasm and heated imagination. But in the midst of this surrounding darkness there is a goodly number who have another spirit within them, having tasted of the heavenly gift, and the powers of the world to come. Their number is happily increasing at the present time, and an uncommon interest is taken by them in the instruction of the ignorant, and the conversion of the abandoned. Not a poet arrives, not a wind blows, but brings us joyful accounts of the revival of God's work in our own country, or the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom in foreign lands. And every lover of souls must witness, with lively satisfaction, the efforts making to spread the knowledge of salvation by means of the bible and missionaries.

But after all, are not the great and frequent revivals of religion which have taken place, too much like the brooks descending from the hills, which suddenly rise with a heavy fall of rain, and as suddenly cease to flow when the rain is stayed? Depending too little on the ordinary influences of the Holy Spirit and the means of grace, we have but little of that steady zeal and uniform perseverance in the spirit of reformation which is necessary to the continuance of the
work of God.* It is probable there will always be some variation in this work. Sinners will not always be awakened and converted in equal numbers, in equal time, or with equal signs of the divine power; because the Spirit of God is not always equally poured out. This observation respects the extraordinary influences of the Holy Spirit: His ordinary influences are never withheld. And these are all that is necessary to salvation, to the commencement or continuance of the work of God. It is probable, therefore, that were the body of Christian professors what they ought to be, we should always have more or less of the work of God among us. Converts are the children of the church; and therefore it is said, when Zion travaileth she shall bring forth. And observation corroborates the declaration of scripture. Where there is a deep experience and uniform practice of piety—a sincere love for souls, and an earnest spirit of prayer preserved in the church, this work of God continues; but where this is not the case, it declines.

But Christians in general, instead of a uniform zeal, are found to rise and fall with the excitement of particular times and occasions. They go only with the wind and tide. At a time of general attention to religion, when sinners are coming home to the Lord who bought them, we may see old professors as zealous and happy as young ones; but as soon as this work comes to a stand, a reflux takes place in their devotion, their zeal dies, and the fruitful field becomes a barren plain; coldness and spiritual death take the place of love to God and man, and iniquity begins to abound. Places of social worship once crowded, are now nearly forsaken: the exercises of religion, once so full of comfort, now yield little or no satisfaction. A less strict observance of the Lord's day, the ordinances, and means of grace, begins to show itself, and the neglect of closet duties and family religion soon follow. Or if the outward forms of religion are still kept up, they yield as little strength and comfort to the mere formalist, as acceptableness to Him who requires spiritual worship.

The churches are indeed enlarged; but what do mere numbers signify? If the fruits of the Spirit be gone from the soul, it may be said of the late glorious harvest, that all which remains of it is the straw and the chaff, without the wheat. This is not all. If faith declines, and love grows cold,” it is impossible but that the “lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life” should again

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* Since writing the above, I have noticed with pleasure an observation in one of our religious publications, relative to the continuance of the work of God in New-Haven and the neighbouring towns, which commenced last fall. The writer supposes it may justly lead to the inquiry, Why revivals are generally so short?—It ought to lead to this inquiry. But the cause will be found in the want of zeal, and deep steady religion among Christians.
to eradicate these evils, would be to affront Christ as our kind and powerful intercessor, as well as to deceive our own hearts.

It would not be enough if there were no out-breaking sins, or gross irregularities in the professors of Christianity. God requires truth in the inward parts, the whole substance of his law to be written in our hearts. A lukewarm spirit is an abomination in his sight, especially if it be found in those whose hearts once glowed with his love. Their state is a greater offence to the Redeemer, than that of open rebellion in those who never felt the power of the gospel. "I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

It is unspeakably desirable that Christianity should spread and cover the face of the whole earth. But should that event take place, and yet the work be no deeper than we now see in the great body of Christians, we should be far from realizing that glorious state of the church foretold by the prophets, and prayed for by Christians in every age. The same love of the world that we now see, and the same passions which now rankle in the hearts of Christians, would mar the glory, and disturb the peace of the Millenium.

Here then we should pause and ask; must this state of things continue always? Must the cause of God labour under this reproach for ever? Must the hearts of Christians remain corrupt as long as they live upon earth? Most certainly these things ought not so to be. The gospel is like the "axe laid unto the root of the tree: every tree, therefore, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is to be hewn down and cast into the fire." Or it may be called a fountain, in which we may all wash and be clean.

The great error of Christians has been to limit the work of God, and deny a perfect cleansing of the soul from sin in this life. This has entailed upon the church that state of imperfection which we have just now glanced at.

The confusion of thought in which nearly all Christians are involved, respecting what is attainable under the gospel, is not a little to be wondered at, and lamented. While the learned are urging their inquiries in every other branch of science, and seem determined on knowing all that can be known, how few ministers of the gospel, how few doctors in the church, have attempted to show the experimental and practical extent of that command of our blessed Lord, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect." How few have seriously considered the following points,—

What is the kind and degree of perfection taught in the gospel? How far may a fallen creature be restored to the image of God in this life? What is it to be holy—to be sanctified wholly—what is the extent of Christian duty and privilege?

And yet we must acknowledge that it is of the utmost importance in Christian experience to be satisfied upon these heads. Till this is done, and the end of our calling be distinctly marked and known, we shall not be likely to press towards the mark for the prize of our high calling. We might with as much propriety expect a man to run a race successfully, without knowing the ground he is to go over, or the end of the course; or an army to fight a battle in the dark, as Christians to go on to perfection, without knowing what that perfection is. In this case the Christian will always be perplexed in his views, entangled with uncertainty and fear, embarrassed by his ignorance of his own state, discouraged by the prevalence of his difficulties, and enfeebled by the strength and number of his foes. He will not know whether he is gaining or losing ground, whether he is in the way he should go, or out of it.

And such I take to be the actual state of many, if not all those who are not going on to perfection. They are frequently in the dark: and no wonder; for they expect to be so! Their internal corruptions prevail against them: and no marvel; for they never fought them as those who expect to conquer. They have great anxiety about their future state; because they never looked for an attainment beyond sin and uncertainty. Whereas were the doctrine of Christian Perfection, with the way which leads to it, set before them, they would have a luminous path to walk in, till they should attain unto the measure of the stature of a perfect man in Christ.

What then is that perfection which will do so much for us? We may take the word perfection according to its radical meaning, for that which is finished, accomplished; and the rule by which we are to judge of Christian Perfection is the will of God revealed in the gospel. When a person is what God requires he should be, and does what God requires he should do, he is said to be perfect. Any other word, therefore, which describes the state of those who are wholly conformed to the will of God, will convey my meaning as well as the word perfect. The will of God being the rule by which we are to judge of perfection, it is easy to see that the meaning of the word will vary when applied to different orders of beings, or to the same order under different dispensations. Thus angelic perfection is a greater degree of moral excellence than human perfection; as God requires a more extensive obedience of angels than of men. Thus too the degree of perfection required of innocent Adam was greater than that which is required of his fallen sons; and the degree of perfection required of Christians is greater than that which was required of the Jews, &c. But still the will of God is the rule of perfection in every case. We have, therefore, only
to inquire what is the will of God concerning us, and we shall see at once what is Christian Perfection.

Let us then ask what God does, and what he does not, require of men under the gospel? And we may safely say that he does not require a perfection inconsistent with our nature, our capacity, or our condition in life. He does not require natural perfection of us,—as that we should always be in health, that we should have perfect knowledge, that we should never mistake in judgment or err in practice, &c. Innumerable errors springing from unavoidable ignorance, still cleave to the best of men. These, according to the law given to man before the fall, are sins, and need the atoning blood. In this sense, therefore, there is no perfection. Least of all does God require a degree of perfection of us that will not admit of a greater degree.* But the perfection which God requires of us is of the moral kind, and consists in freedom from all those desires, tempers, and actions which are forbidden; and in the exercise of all those desires, tempers, and actions which are required in the gospel. This is summarily expressed by the word love—love is the fulfilling of the law. When we love the Lord our God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength, the love of God is perfected in us. And where this fulness of love is, there is an entire devotion of soul and body to God. "The old man is crucified, with the affections and lusts, and the new man is put on, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." "Old things are done away, and behold all things have become new." Not a desire, not a temper, not an emotion rises, but in obedience to the will of God.

*"Here only Christ is heard to speak, Here Jesus reigns alone." That kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is fully set up in the soul. The subject of this has the closest union with Christ, the deepest fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and God, the holy Trinity, is his all in all. In this state faith, operating with its greatest energy, realizes and possesses its glorious object; in presence of whom the soul relinquishes every other enjoyment, and cries out,

"My God, my portion and my love, My everlasting all; I've none but thee in heav'n above, Or on this earthly ball."

Such a soul can rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. And though he may be tempted of the devil, and variously tried, yet he need feel sin no more. Sin is destroyed, and not merely suspended. He had a deep, distressing view of the pollution of his nature after he believed. He cried to the Lord his God, for a clean heart, and for a right spirit to be renewed within him; and He heard his prayer. He circumcised his heart to love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. He knows it is no delusion. The Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is sanctified wholly. And he rejoiceth herein, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And what fruit may be expected from such a tree? The tree being good, the fruit will be good also. Such a Christian is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." There is not only none of the old fruit, the principles and motions of sin remaining; but all the fruits of the Spirit have ripened in his soul. And the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, with every good word and work. He is filled with goodness. Whatever temptation or provocation he meets with, he is not moved to pride, anger, or impatience. He renders good for evil, blessing for cursing, and prays for them that despitefully use him and persecute him. In a word, he loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. He walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, and glorifies God in his body and Spirit which are God's. This is Christian Perfection. This is what God requires of us under the gospel. This we may attain to.

And why, my brethren, should any object to the word perfection? Is not both the word and the thing scriptural? That the word is, *I use the word sin here with reference to the gospel, and not with respect to the law, or covenant of works, given to our first parents before the fall. When God created man in his own image, his intellects were sound and good, his understanding clear, and his knowledge of all things within the circle in which he was appointed to move, we may suppose was perfect. And God could not but require a service of him proportioned to the perfection of his powers. But it is far otherwise with man since the fall. Since that fatal period his reasoning faculties are impaired, his understanding clouded, and his knowledge, after his best endeavours to the contrary, is often imperfect. And in compassion to his weakness God has instituted the covenant of grace in Christ, and has placed man under the gospel. The perfection, therefore, which God now requires of man, must be determined by the gospel, and not by the covenant of works made with him before the fall. After this full explanation I trust I may use the language of the inspired writers, and assert a glorious freedom from sin, without being misunderstood.
Having magnified the law, and made it honourable: and having made himself an offering for sin, he has reconciled God to us, and the Holy Spirit is sent forth to make intercession for us, and to help our infirmities: So that the adorable Trinity is himself engaged to perfect this work in us.

When we say that provision is made in the gospel for our perfection in holiness, we include not only grace, and the means of grace, but we mean also that it is every way for the glory of God to save us from all sin, and make us perfectly holy in this life. In thus saving the fallen children of men, there is such a display of all the divine perfections, as will excite the admiration, and employ the songs of men and angels for ever.

Connected with the provision made, are the promises of this salvation, this perfection, to all that seek it aright. "He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities," Ps. cxxx. 3. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you—I will also save you from all your uncleanesses," Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. "Wash you, make you clean, &c. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. To these the apostle refers in that exhortation, "Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God," 2 Cor. vii. 1. Equally clear and express is that ancient promise, "The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," Deut. xxx. 6. "Unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," 2 Pet. i. 4. In these "exceeding great and precious promises," we may reckon all those which tell us, "he will cleanse us from all sin—from all unrighteousness;"—that "his strength shall be made perfect in our weakness;" and that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," &c. And we may well ask, does the law enjoin any thing that the gospel does not promise? Nay, in this respect we are sure it does not; for God himself says, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," Heb. viii. 10. When this is accomplished, every command is fulfilled in us.

"When Jesus makes my heart his home,
My sin shall all depart;
And lo! he saith I quickly come,
To cleanse, and rule thy heart."
have been baptized with the Holy Ghost, “we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him” by this baptism, “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is” thus “dead, is freed from sin,”** 5ec. Rom. vi.

That this is the true intent and meaning of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, appears from the following considerations: 1. In the discourse which our Lord held with his disciples just before he suffered, he promised them the Comforter, and instructed them to pray in his name: ask, and receive, said he, that your joy may be full. 2. He prayed to his Father for them, saying, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” 3. The effects produced in them by the baptism of the Holy Ghost exactly answer to the instructions he had given them, and to the prayers he had offered for them. They were so sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost, as to be of one heart and of one soul; and that kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, was fully set up in them.

This baptism of the Spirit makes new creatures, in the fullest sense of the word, of all those who are the subjects of it. The change which this produces, is frequently greater than that produced at justification. Thus it was with the disciples of our Lord. Previous to their being baptized with the Holy Ghost, they were ignorant of the nature and necessity of the death of Christ, and of the nature of his kingdom; they had prejudices, partial views and illiberal feelings, and could even talk of calling down fire from heaven upon those who followed not with them: they were timid and fearful; their faith was weak, their devotion inconstant, and their enjoyment small. But as soon as they received the Holy Ghost, they were changed in all respects. Immediately they understood the nature of their Lord’s kingdom: their faith was confirmed; they were filled with love to God and man, which banished all malignant passions from their hearts, together with all fear of reproach, persecution and death. In a word, their joy was full.

I will only add concerning this baptism, that Christians need it now as much as they ever did, to cleanse them from all sin, and renew them in the image of God: and they have the promise of it: “For,” said the Apostle Peter, “the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Acts ii. 39.
Should it remain a doubt with my readers whether Christians can be saved from all sin in this life, there is one remark which I think must silence every objection. It is this: The promises relating to our complete sanctification are the most clear, explicit, and full, of any that are to be found in the Bible. For instance. It is not said that God will justify us wholly, that he will pardon us perfectly, and seldom, that he will forgive all our sins; though no one doubts that this is implied in the promises. But when our sanctification is spoken of, this is the common language: "The God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless, &c. Let us go on to perfection—perfecting holiness in the fear of God. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, from all unrighteousness, from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, from all our uncleannesses, from all our idols. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled," &c. &c. And why is this strong language used, unless it be to engage us to go on to perfection, and to insure that blessing to us? Christians thus purified to serve the living God, are lively stones; and of such the spiritual house, the church of God, should be built. It is the internal purity of the Christian Church which constitutes her brightest glory. All outward circumstances and appendages, however dazzling to the eyes of mortals, have no glory in this respect, by reason of this glory that excelleth.

The prophets who lived under the shadowy dispensation of Moses, have thus described the Christian church: David says, "The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in ream of needlework." Jesus Christ addresses the church in the language of prophecy, calling her his "Love, his dove, and his undefiled;" and compares her purity to the luminary of day, "clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." Isaiah says, "There shall come out of Zion a Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. "The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy that it cannot hear." "Therefore the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and he will teach us of his ways, and we shall walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and 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." "And he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughter of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord shall create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon all her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time, from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from the storm, and from rain." "Arise; shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.—Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The Sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the Moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy Sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy Moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: They shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands; that I may be glorified.—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just, and having salvation, lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass." "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is as a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit like a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Should it be objected, that these prophecies relate to the Millennium, or to a state of the church yet future; I answer, 1. The church is a collective body, made up of individuals, and can possess no more holiness than the individuals possess who compose the church.

2. I know of no argument to prove that Christians cannot be as holy now, as at any future period of the church.

3. Probably the only sense in which the most perfect state of the church militant shall differ from her present most perfect members, will be in respect of numbers and outward advantages. It should seem that ever since the Christian dispensation was fully opened on the day of Pentecost, as much has been within the reach of Christians, with respect to spiritual illumination, purity and comfort, as will ever be obtained on this side of heaven.

4. The objection seems to suppose that holiness shall be produced in a different manner in the Millennium, from that by which it is now obtained; (if it be not rather a method to get rid of the subject without forming any definite ideas upon it.) But we should
do well to observe, that in the nature of things, holiness cannot be produced spontaneously, but is always to be obtained, as it now is, in the way of virtuous seeking and striving for it. The opposition from the combined powers of darkness will never cease, nor will the divine power ever supersede the necessity of human agency in producing holiness. Nor have we any promise of a new revelation, dispensation, or greater assistance than is now afforded us. Christ has already died for our sins, risen for our justification, and ascended up on high to make intercession for us. The Holy Ghost is already given. All the means and riches of grace are now displayed before us in the gospel. If, therefore, it is impossible for us to perfect holiness now, it will be equally impossible to do it at a future period; if it will be possible then, it is so now. All that we have a right to expect in the most prosperous state of the church militant, above what we now enjoy, or might enjoy, is in respect of her enlargement, and outward circumstances.

5. The objection supposes that the Christian church has not obtained any advantage in spiritual grace and holiness, above the Jewish church, and will not obtain any till the Millenium. But though we admit that some of the prophecies and promises relate to the church in a future period; yet it is equally certain, and more clear, that those which describe the superior privileges of the Christian church, belong to the whole gospel dispensation.

In light, grace, and purity, the Christian church has greatly the advantage of the church under the Mosaic dispensation. Nearly every thing under the law, was typical of good things to come. I do not mean by this that there was no true piety in the Jewish church. But it is a point, which none will dispute, that the objects of faith were not so clearly revealed then as they are now. Jesus Christ had not then come in the flesh.—was not crucified. The Holy Ghost was not then given.—The way into the holiest of all was not then made manifest. The taking place of these events was intended to bring in the richest and last dispensation of the grace of God.—The law was given by Moses: but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Christ came that we might have life more abundantly than was ever enjoyed before he came.

This view of the subject is confirmed to us by the writers of the New Testament. Thus the apostle Peter: “Believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” 1 Pet. i. 8—12. And Paul thus writes to the Romans: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope,” chap. x. 4. He tells the Galatians that the dispensation of the law was a state of bondage, in which the “child differed nothing from a servant: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,—and the Spirit of his Son, crying in our hearts, Abba Father,” and thus become heirs of God through Christ, chap iv.

Once more. We find the apostle Paul quoting from the prophet Jeremiah, (chap. xxxi. 31—34.) and applying to the gospel dispensation the following passage; “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:—I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” Upon this passage we may remark, 1. That the two covenants mentioned in it, embrace the two dispensations of Moses and of Christ. 2. The new covenant, by being placed in opposition to the old, must embrace the whole time under the gospel dispensation,—the apostolic and following ages, as well as the time of the Millennium; see Heb. viii. 7—12. 3. We have no promise of another covenant, or dispensation; therefore this must contain all the privileges and blessings of the children of God. And if the perfection of holiness be one of those privileges, it is contained in the covenant under which we live, and may now be enjoyed as fully as at any future time.

That the apostles believed this state attainable, we cannot doubt, when we see them at all times, and in all places, labouring in this cause; “Frenching Christ, warning every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom; that they might present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,” Nor did they labour in vain. Many followed them as they followed Christ, and with them attained to this perfection. To such the apostle John writes, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because
as he is, so are we in this world," 1 John iv. 17. And St. Paul thus writes to the Philippians: "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded," chap. iii. 15. Such also were all those at Jerusalem, of whom it is said, "They were filled with faith and the Holy Ghost; and were of one heart, and one soul."

Should it be objected here, that there were many disorders and imperfections in the churches, during the apostolic age; and we cannot expect to be more pure than they were; I answer. 1. While some individuals were perfect, others were not. 2. The disorders and imperfections found in many of the churches in the apostolic age, are recorded as beacons, to warn us of the rocks on which they split, and not as an argument to reconcile us to the like disorders and imperfections. 3. There was no necessity for those disorders in the primitive churches, any more than in the churches in our own days. God required perfect holiness of Christians then, and the gospel contained the promise of it to all that would ask in faith. And we cannot see why all might not have been as perfect as those of whom the apostle says, "Let as many of us as be perfect be thus minded." The apostles always reproved their faults, and instructed them in the way of perfect holiness.

Against the perfection contended for in this address, I know of no objection of weight. The objection sometimes built upon particular instances of mal-conduct in the Jewish church, and upon particular texts brought from the Old Testament, will not apply; because we have seen that the Old Testament is not a standard of Christian perfection. In other words, we are not to measure the attainments of Christians by the experience of Jews; because the privileges of Christians are greater. If, therefore, any valid objection be found against this doctrine, it must be brought from the New Testament. And here I am aware that some will urge the words of the apostle, "If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John i. 8. But that the apostle could not mean to deny Christian Perfection in these words must be evident, because he is the strongest asserter of that perfection. In this passage he may be understood as saying, "I have before affirmed, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." (verse 7.) And no man can say I need it not: I have no sin to be cleansed from. If I say we have no sin, that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves, and make God a liar. But, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, not only to forgive us our sins, but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that we may go and sin no more." See ver. 7—10.

The case of St. Paul in the latter part of the seventh chapter of Romans, is also sometimes made an objection to the doctrine of Christian Perfection; but without effect. The apostle there de-

scribes his state under conviction; and to give his description the more effect, he changes the tense of the verb (a thing frequent with the sacred, and other writers) from the past to the present time. The learned and pious Dr. P. Doddridge understood this passage thus, as also Dr. Watts, as we learn from his hymn upon the place, entitled "Conviction of sin by the law," and beginning, "Lord bow secure my conscience was," &c. and most of the commentators.

But human authority has but little weight here: let the apostle decide the controversy for us. And we find that he is a strong asserter of that glorious freedom from sin maintained in these pages.

"Wherefore, my brethren, he says, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, (a proof, by the way, that he was not then at the time of writing this epistle) the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the curse of the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter," Rom. vii. 4, 5, 6. In the sixth chapter, he says, "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin," &c. And in the eighth chapter he asserts the same glorious privilege of the children of God: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Thus we see that the apostle was so far from being "carnal, sold under sin" all his days, that he expressly asserts the contrary, and at the same time teaches us, that it is our duty and privilege to be saved from sin, as well as his own.

If the passages already considered, form no objection to the doctrine of Christian Perfection, we may rest assured there are none that do. And, indeed, after considering the nature and weight of the evidence adduced in favour of that doctrine, we should feel inclined to suspect the soundness of every objection and argument that can be brought against it; because no objection can be valid, unless it possess sufficient weight to do away the evidence in favour. But the evidence in favour of Christian Perfection is of a character not to be invalidated. It is derived from the character of God and man, and their mutual relation;—from the nature of God's law, and from the provision and promises of the gospel; and lastly from the experience of the apostles and first Christians.
And now, my Christian Brethren, I am ready to make my appeal to your candour and good sense, for the reasonableness of this doctrine, and ask, why we should not **go on to perfection**? Is there anything unreasonable, or unscriptural in it? Is it not what we might suppose the holy and good God would require of his moral creatures? And is it not what is suitable and proper for us to render to him, and good for ourselves, and necessary to our future happiness? I imagine you hear say, "It is no more than God requires, or than is necessary as a preparation for heaven; but then we cannot obtain it before death." Alas! my brethren, where do you read, in the Old Testament or the New, that we cannot be cleansed from all sin till death? Do you not, by saying thus, make something necessary to our being cleansed, besides the blood of Christ? Death might cure the diseases of the body; but what affinity have mortal diseases with the death of the body? But if death were appointed to cleanse us from sin, either in whole or in part, we should not be indebted to the blood of Christ for our full salvation. This thought no Christian can admit for a moment. And if the blood of Christ alone is necessary to cleanse us from all sin, we may as well be cleansed now, as at the moment of death.

Not only so, if God requires perfect holiness of us now, who will be willing to defer his obedience till death? And if to be cleansed from all sin, and made perfectly holy, is necessary as a preparation for the heavenly state, who would feel safe to neglect that preparation till the awful hour of death? Consider how we are to be made perfect? Is it without our seeking and striving? Nay, verily, but by confessing, repenting, believing in Christ, and working out our salvation with fear and trembling! And is the house of death the fittest time for this work? Is it not often the case, that people are incapable of any work at that time, when the body is filled with pain, the efforts of the mind enfeebled, and reason itself distracted?

These considerations make it as much our interest as our duty, to set about this work immediately, and look for this salvation now. And why not now? Are not all things ready on the part of Christ? While he commands us to be holy, to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, does he not assure us that he is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him? If it be the will of God we should **now** be holy, holiness must **now** be attainable; because he could never will an impossibility. And that it is his will, and every way for his glory, that we should be saved from all sin, we have seen; and nothing can prevent our being thus saved but our unbelief.

But many, when they ought to believe, are afraid of perfection, and condemn it without knowing what it is. They seem to think a heap of monstrous absurdities lies concealed under that name, and therefore say, away with it! away with it! But did they properly consider the subject, they would no more act in this manner, than they would cry out, like the Jews of old, "crucify him! crucify him!"

To what can it be attributed but the want of due consideration, that many people cannot hear the word perfection mentioned, without attaching to it an idea of absolute or sinless perfection; and because of the absurdity of these, condemn everything that bears the name. They seem to think that it is pride, arrogance, presumption and contempt of Christ, to talk of being perfect in this life. Never was there a more glaring mistake! The perfection which we find in the gospel, and which is recommended in this address, is the perfection of humility, self-abasement, repentance, poverty of spirit, love to God and man,—and all through a faith in Christ which takes him for our "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." None is so free from the spirit of the Pharisees, none makes so much use of Christ as the perfect Christian. Christ is his meat and drink, his spiritual apparel, his life, his all. He can say in a deeper sense than any other Christian,

"Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of thy death.

But if this perfection does not make us slight Christ, will it not su-
percede the Christian warfare, and render mortification and watch-
fulness unnecessary?

By no means. Notwithstanding the Christian is delivered from all sin, yet he must carry on the war against the world and the devil as long as he lives. He must also keep his body under, and con-
tinually bring it into subjection; he must watch unto prayer:—In a word, he must exercise the whole armour of righteousness on the right hand, and on the left, that he may retain his integrity, and his glorious freedom. It was by doing thus that the sinless Saviour preserved his innocence. And it is only in the same way that the perfect Christian can preserve his.

While this doctrine implies every part of experimental and prac-
tical religion, the denial of it leads imperceptibly to evils, the most deeply to be lamented. They who deny it, come by degrees to feel a prejudice against it, which prevents their receiving instruction upon the point, or listening with candour to the most serious and weighty arguments brought in support of it. This prejudice ob-
scures the beauties of holiness in their eyes, abates their hunger and thirst after righteousness, quenches the spirit of devotion, gives
strength to the evil propensities of corrupt nature, consumes their
enjoyment, induces spiritual languor, barrenness and death; renders
the means of grace dry and unprofitable, and at length reconciles
them to the thought of continuing in this state so long as they live.
As soon as this state takes place, all striving for holiness, all aiming
at perfection is at an end; and it is a miracle if the love of the world
does not come in with a full tide and drown them in perdition and
destruction. This is not all. The same prejudice leads them to re-
gard the friends and asserters of perfection as unsound in the faith,
and their experience as a strange mixture of weakness, superstition,
enthusiasm, folly and presumption.

These evils, great as they are, could be better borne, if the cor-
rup tions that are in the world did not take occasion from them to
strike deeper root, to extend themselves on every side, to check ex-
perimental religion in its progress, and thus cause the name of
Christ to be reproached and blasphemed.

I know, my brethren, that you deplore these corruptions in the
church and in the world. But have you considered their cure? It
is certain if that kind and degree of perfection which has been ex-
hibited in the preceding pages, were firmly fixed in the hearts of
the children of men, it would prove the cure of most, if not all the
evils of which we now complain. We can easily admit, that if the
human will could be brought into due subjection to the will of God,
and the affections could be purified from all sinful mixtures, the
great sources of evil and unhappiness would be removed: and if the
heart could be filled with that love to God and man which is enjoi-
ged in the gospel, peace and concord would abound; while the er-
rors springing from the unavoidable weakness and ignorance of men,
would be no scandal to the Christian name, but would afford an op-
portunity for mutual forbearance, and an exercise for patience and
charity.

I would not represent you, Christian brethren, as doing anything
knowingly, to injure the cause of Christ: and I admit that you be-
lieve and teach that Christians ought to be holy, that they ought to
be perfect. But is it not known also that many of you believe
there is no perfection to be attained in this life? And do not some
ministers of the gospel assert, almost in the same breath, both that
Christians ought to be perfect, and that there is no perfection to be
enjoyed in this world? And is this the way to promote Christian
Perfection? Is it not the direct way to pull down what it is acknow-
ledged we ought to build up? Can we animate Christians to go on
to perfection, to perfect holiness in the fear of God, by making them
believe there is no such thing attainable before death? They are
required to push the war against their inbred foes, till they are all
destroyed. But if they go to this war under the embarrassment
of believing that they shall be foiled in every onset, is it reasonable
to suppose they will come off victorious? Certainly not, if they are
to conquer through faith. How absurd it would appear in a gen-
eral to harangue his men in sight of the enemy, and say to them,
“You are now going into battle; but you cannot conquer.” And
how absurd, not to say inhuman, it would be in a physician to ad-
dress his patients thus, “You must take medicine; but you cannot
get well.” And shall the ministers of the gospel pursue a course
equally absurd, and more injurious? Faith is the grand instrument
of our sanctification as well as of our justification. Those who
ought to believe to the saving of their souls, often stagger through
unbelief, or a weak faith. And shall we increase their difficulties
by telling them they can never obtain? Shall we throw them down
as they are coming to Christ?

Those who are seeking sanctification have their difficulties as
well as those who are seeking justification; and need every en-
couragement to keep up their hope, and inspire confidence of suc-
cess. And there is every encouragement for them. Indeed if they
were seeking anything but holiness, it would be different. Were
they seeking deliverance from bodily affliction, from the innocent
infirmities of human nature, from temptation and outward opposition,
&c, we should be compelled to speak to them in a doubtful lan-
guage. We could only say, God has sometimes granted a partial, or
a momentary deliverance in such cases. But he has no where prom-
ised us a total deliverance from natural evil in this life. These are
not sin; but they are necessary as means to purify you from sin, and
make you fruitful in righteousness. They are therefore designed
for your good, and shall work out for you a far more exceeding and
eternal weight of glory. You must bear them with patience; and in
all your prayers for deliverance, you must submit, as our Lord did,
saying, “not my will, but thine be done.”

But when deliverance from sin is the object of inquiry and the sub-
ject of prayer, it is far otherwise. In this case we cannot say “It is
the will of God you should carry this body of sin about you as
long as you live. It is for your good; and therefore you must bear
it with patience.” But on the contrary, we can show from the law
and from the gospel, that it is the will of God we should be saved
both from the guilt, and the pollution of sin. We can show by a
thousand promises, that if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just
to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Here
then we should use a strong, assuring language. We should say to
them who are groaning under the burthen of their corruptions, “Be-
hold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world! He is
able and worthy. He gave himself for you, that he might purify you to himself, and make you his peculiar treasure. He offers you full salvation. Believe this testimony, and you shall be saved accordingly. According to your faith it shall be done unto you. All things are possible to them that believe. Through faith the ancients subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight armies of aliens.” And you shall do the same.

“Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, it shall be done.”

Suppose then a Christian, labouring under a deep, and painful conviction of the remaining corruptions of his heart, and believing that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin, comes and claims that blood by faith, would he not in that moment be cleansed from all sin? Undoubtedly he would. For this is the promise of God, and his promise cannot fail.

The difference, in the practical effect, between believing the attainableness of Christian Perfection, and not believing it, is greater than can easily be imagined. Let one who does not believe it, come before God to confess his inbred sin, and ask God for a clean heart, and his mouth may be filled with proper expressions and scripture phrases; but his heart will not go with his words. He may have some good desires, which, if they are not stirred in the birth, are not sufficiently enlightened and earnest to enable him to lay hold on the object. Nay, the thought that he is asking for a thing which he cannot obtain, which God will not now bestow on him, operates as a damper upon his desires and affections, and his devotion dies upon his lips. He rises from his prayers with his prospects overcast, and the cold hand of despondency pressing his heart. How uncomfortable is the state occasioned by unbelief in this case! But is it not too common? Reader, is it not thine own case? Hast thou not offered the prayer of unbelief? Hast thou not trifled with this weighty concern as often as thou hast asked God to cleanse thy heart from all sin, when thou believest there is no such thing to be obtained?

But on the contrary, let him believe that he is asking according to the will of God, and that the things he asks for he shall obtain, and the effect will be the other way. In proportion as he views the attainableness of the object, his desires grow stronger, and his expectation is raised. The nearer he contemplates the blessing, the more vehemently does his soul struggle to enjoy it. The Holy Spirit makes intercession in him with groanings which cannot be uttered. He

truly hungers and thirsts after righteousness, even full redemption in the blood of Christ. He can say,

“My heartstrings groan with deep complaint,
My flesh lies panting, Lord, for thee;
And every limb, and every joint,
Stretches for perfect liberty.”

He pleads with God in such language as this: “Lord hast thou not promised that if we ask for any thing according to thy will, we shall have the petition we ask? And hast thou not commanded me to be holy, to be perfect, to love thee with all my heart, soul, mind and strength? And is it not thy will to cleanse me from all my filthiness, and from all my idols? I cannot doubt it. Lord let it be done unto me according to thy word. Speak, and it shall be done. Command, and it shall stand fast. Didst thou not say, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light?’ O, speak light and life into my soul. I know thou canst do all things. Thou canst destroy the work of the devil, and make an end of sin. Thou canst bring in everlasting righteousness. Thy hand is not shortened, that thou canst not save; neither is thine ear heavy that thou canst not hear. I am distressed: undertake thou for me. I cannot endure that thine enemies should live in my heart.

“Tis worse than death my God to love,
And not my God alone.”

But I am weakness and unworthiness itself. I have nothing of my own to plead. I come to thee in the name of my Redeemer and Advocate; and thou wilt not, thou canst not turn me away. Hast thou not given thine only begotten Son to die for me? And wilt thou not with him also freely give me all things?—I know thou wilt,—thou dost give me my heart’s desire. I now take him for my sanctification and redemption, as well as for my wisdom and righteousness. Lord ’tis done. Thou hast ravished me with one of thine eyes. Thou art altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand. My Beloved is mine, and I am his,—his wholly, and his for ever.—I live not, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

“Henceforth may no profane delight,
Divide this consecrated soul: Possess it thou who hast the right,
As Lord and Master of the whole.”

Thus does faith in the first instance increase our desires; and in the second crown them. Faith says with Jacob, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.” And when faith takes hold on Christ, the trees are plucked up by the roots, and the mountains become a plain before our Zerubbabel. His kingdom is fully set up in the soul; and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are the fruit of his reign.
And blessed be God there are witnesses of this great salvation at the present day, and their number is increasing. If you ask who are they that have attained unto this state of perfection? I answer: they are all those who have fled to Christ in the manner just now described, and “have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” They may be known by the spirit that is in them. They are dead to all the blandishments of the world, and God is the only portion of their souls. They are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, while their affection is set on things above. They are holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. They walk by faith, not by sight; and therefore they have that peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them, and witnessing with their spirits that they are cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit. They endure all the privations and crosses of life—all the oppositions and persecutions of the wicked, as seeing him who is invisible—without murmuring, or impatience. They are contented, cheerful, and happy. And because they love God with all the heart, they love every soul of man as themselves. They delight in the saints as the excellent of the earth, while they pity the ignorant and such as are out of the way of righteousness and peace. Their love is truly catholic, not confined to their relations or those of their own party; but embraces all mankind, their enemies not excepted. Theirs is the true charity; for it suffereth long, and is kind; it envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself indecently, seeketh not her own ease, pleasure, honour or temporal advantage, is not provoked to anger by any insult or injury, thinketh no evil willingly of any one, rejoiceth not in iniquity, covereth all the faults of others, believeth all things that tend to the advantage of another’s character, and where it cannot believe, it hopeth all things, either that the sin was not great, or that God will give repentance unto life. Meantime it endureth all things, whatever the injustice, malice or cruelty of men can inflict. Yea, perfect Christians go farther still, and render good for evil, blessing for cursing, and pray for those who use them despitefully and persecute them. In their spirit appears the gentleness, and in their conversation, the simplicity and purity of Jesus Christ. They submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, and walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. These are perfect Christians wherever they are found, by whatever name they are called, or however they may think of their own state.

Now, if some have attained to this state, what reason can be assigned why all Christians may not attain to it? “There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism” for us all. And how desirable it is that all Christians should thus “put on the Lord Jesus Christ!” Then the church would appear what she ought to be, a city set upon a hill, more beautiful than Tirzah, more comely than Jerusalem. She would then be worthy to be called the city of the great King! “The glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God should be seen in her.” We might then exultingly say, Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.

It is this state of internal purity, unity and peace, which shall constitute the church a praise in all the earth. And when she shall have attained to this, however small her numbers, compared with the rest of mankind, she will soon stretch her cords round the globe. For then her beauty will be admired by all nations, and to partake in her glory and felicity shall become the desire of all. The prophet appears to have had this view when he said, “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Thou shalt flow together and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee,” &c.

I would not be thought to undervalue the grace of God in the smallest Christian. The lowest state in the divine life is an unspeakable blessing. But this, surely, is no reason why we should not aspire after the highest attainments. The perfection of holiness is the greatest beauty of the gospel, and the brightest glory of the church: And the church will never have her full share of influence and weight in the world, till she is thus beautified and glorified. In this state the purest doctrines and the highest virtues are united and embodied, and operate as a charm upon the beholder. It is by beholding the moral perfections of Jesus Christ that we are “changed into the same image, as from glory into glory.” And it is impossible to see the highest virtues delineated in the lives of Christians, and not be led to imitate them. It was this exalted piety, in conjunction with the preaching of the gospel, that wrought so effectually in the apostolic age. The apostles could appeal to the world for the innocency, the holiness and the happiness of the Christians, as proof of the divinity of the gospel; and when unbelievers saw their piety and entire devotion; their steadfastness, union and fellowship; their disinterestedness and heavenly-mindedness, they not only feared to oppose them, but were constrained to join them, though at the expense of everything the world calls dear. And it was acknowledged that those who embraced Christianity on this condition, were unspeakable gainers.
It would be a vain attempt to account for the rapid spread of the gospel in the apostolic age, from the evidence of miracles; because miracles had been frequent before the church had attained to her greatest purity, without the same effect. Besides, those who were determined to oppose the gospel, could, when they had nothing else to say, impute the plainest miracles to diabolical influence. But when they saw the transforming power of the gospel upon the Christians, the evidence was irresistible, and the conviction sunk deep. They were disarmed of their opposition to this religion, and became its willing captives. The effect was reasonable. There was seen an agreement between the doctrines of the gospel and the lives of Christians—a consistency between their profession and their practice.

But when people professing Christianity, give sad proof that a carnal mind still remains in them, that the love of the world is not purged out of their hearts, that worldly maxims and customs still influence their lives, and that they are not what their religion requires they should be; and especially when they contend, that they cannot be what the gospel requires they should be, nor do all that the gospel requires they should do—the “looker on” is apt to suspect the whole for a cheat, and feels but little inducement to exchange an old religion, or a life of pleasure, for a religion which promises to do no more for him. He is ready to conclude that if the difference between those who profess regeneration, and the better sort of those who do not, is so small in this life, regeneration is a thing of no great importance, and all men will fare alike in the future state.

At a time when error prevails, when thousands substitute the name and the form of godliness for the whole of religion, the true disciples of Christ ought to make the difference between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not, as great as possible. And how is this to be done, but by perfecting holiness in the fear of God? It will not be found enough, merely to preach the whole gospel; but the purity of its doctrines, its precepts and promises, its sanctions and motives must have their full influence upon our hearts and lives. Then it shall not be said, “what do these Christians more than others?” but “according to this time it shall be said, what hath God wrought!”—Then the prayers of God’s people shall be heard, the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, and the word of the Lord shall have free course and be glorified.

Great exertions are making at the present day to spread Christianity over the face of all the earth; and the eyes of all the Heathen are turned upon Christendom. And what do they behold? I will not now speak of the church of Rome, I will not speak of any of those national establishments which have united the church and the world; but I will speak of such Christians among ourselves as have had some experience of true religion: and here, what is to be seen? Why, this indeed, that while we have a perfect standard of weight and measure, we cry out against perfection; and assert that there is no such thing attainable in this life! and under this screen our party feuds, love of the world, sinful tempers, lukewarmness, and a whole train of evils take refuge. Suppose the Heathen should come to the knowledge of this, would they not use the old proverb, and say to our missionaries, “Physician heal thyself!”

My brethren, these things ought not so to be. There are many evils in the church, many in the hearts of Christians, for which the gospel points out a remedy. This old leaven must be purged out, that the church may become a new lump—that she may become the salt of the earth.

Here is a great work for the ministers of the gospel. It is of them God speaks: “I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence; and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” This is already in part accomplished. But the work must not stop till the King’s daughter is all glorious within. We must enter into the designs of the great Head of the church, and carry on the work, till all that is accomplished which is yet lacking in the saints.

The ministers of the gospel have not bestowed too much attention upon the enlargement of the church; but they have bestowed too little upon her internal state. A becoming zeal is manifested by many, to convict and convert sinners, and to bring them into the church; and that accomplished, little attention is paid to their progress in piety afterwards. They seem to think their labour with them is at an end, excepting the general course of administration. Few inquire diligently into the state of their brethren’s souls; and fewer still urge them to “forget the things that are behind, and press towards the mark for the prize of their high calling.” How few have taken up this subject with a view to ascertain what is Christian perfection, and to assist their brethren in obtaining it! And I fear I may add, how few understand this way, so as to be able to answer the objections which rise in the mind of the hearer, to clear the difficulties out of the way of such as would seek it, and offer the necessary proofs, arguments, instructions and motives, to all!—My brethren, ye are the ambassadors of Christ!—How high your office! How great your responsibility! Ye have need to be endued with power from on high, to enable you to carry on this great and glorious work. And why should you not enter upon this work to-day? What harm can befall you if ye be followers of that which is good? And what harm can possibly come to your flocks? Can either you, or they, sustain any loss by aiming
at perfection, even though you should not obtain all that is implied in that word? Nay, but you shall be coming nearer and nearer to it, while you are endeavouring after it. Is it not written that the "path of the just is like the light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day?"—That the "righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger?" Then ye shall know, if ye follow on to know the Lord, his going forth to sanctify his people, is like the increasing light of the morning; and he shall come unto you like refreshing and enriching rain, as the former, and as the latter rain upon the earth. It is impossible to seek after perfection and not to grow in grace. And it is equally impossible to seek it ariight, that is, by faith, and not obtain it: "For the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts—And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify unto himself a peculiar people, and he shall purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

And while Christians, and Christian Ministers, are labouring to perfect holiness in the fear of God, religion will revive, and the church will lengthen her cords, and strengthen her stakes. Christians will be drawing nearer and nearer together. Love will prevail, and party feelings gradually subside. The influence of the gospel will become greater, as the piety and virtue it enjoins are more exemplified in the lives of its professors. "Righteousness shall run down our streets as an overflowing stream, and the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea."

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

HYMN

BY REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

1 JESU, Thou Strength of all that turn
The battle to the Gate,
Behold us for thy glory burn,
And for thy kingdom wait.

2 O that thy foes were all subdued,
In bonds of love confin'd,
And for'd to own th' all-cleansing blood,
That flow'd for all mankind.

3 Captain of our salvation, hear,
Saviour of human race,
Appear, in thy own cause appear,
And vindicate thy grace.

4 Thy grace for all divinely free
Doth every sinner call;
Thou drawest all men unto Thee,
For Thou hast purchas'd all.

5 Lo! here we are, thy truth to prove,
To witness Thou art good,
T' assert thine universal love,
And all-redeeming blood.

6 Thy blood from all iniquity
Redeems, and makes us clean;
From pride, and self it sets us free,
From all indwelling sin.

7 The Spirit's living law it writes
Upon our inward parts,
Our new-born souls to God unites,
And purifies our hearts.

8 It keeps our mind in perfect peace,
Thy kingdom it brings in,
Thine everlasting righteousness,
And makes an end of sin.

9 This sovereign antidote expels,
The poison from our veins,
Our old congenial sickness heals,
And purges all our stains.
10 A perfect soundness it imparts,
    Destroys the carnal mind,
And forms in all believing hearts,
    The Saviour of mankind.

11 Come then, dear Lamb for sinners slain,
    Bring in the cleansing flood,
Apply, to wash out every stain
    Thine efficacious blood.

12 O let it sink into our soul,
    Deep as the inbred sin,
Make every wounded spirit whole,
    And every leper clean.

13 Thy sanctifying Word is sure,
    Lord, we our sins confess,
Faithful and just, O make us pure,
    From all unrighteousness.

14 Such power belongeth unto Thee,
    Thy saying we receive;
We shall be pure in heart, and see,
    Thy smiling face, and live.

15 Lord, we believe, and with calm zeal
    For this our faith contend,
Waiting 'till Thou thyself reveal,
    And hoping to the end.

16 Our high, and holy calling's prize
    We earnestly pursue;
Nor fear we, least our thoughts should rise,
    Above what thou canst do.

17 Thy goodness, O all-gracious Lord,
    Is equal to thy power;
And we shall try thy utmost word,
    And we shall sin no more.

18 Thou willest, and it must be done,
    That we should holy be;
And we shall live to thee alone,
    And we shall die to thee.