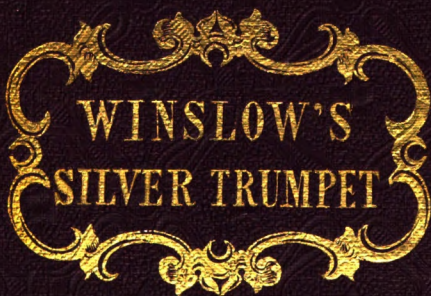

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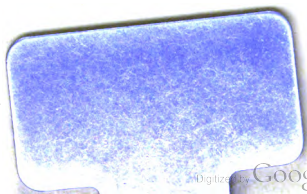
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An ornate, gold-colored frame with intricate scrollwork and floral motifs, surrounding the text. The frame is centered on a dark, textured background.

WINSLOW'S
SILVER TRUMPET

44. 1125.



THE
SILVER TRUMPET;

OR,

THE CHURCH GUIDED AND WARNED

IN

PERILOUS TIMES.



BY OCTAVIUS WINSLOW,

AUTHOR OF

"PERSONAL DECLENSION AND REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE SOUL,"

"THE GLORY OF THE REDEEMER IN HIS PERSON AND WORK,"

"THE INQUIRER DIRECTED TO THE ATONEMENT,"

"WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT," ETC. ETC. ETC.

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MDCCCXLIV.

TO
THE AFFECTIONATE PEOPLE OF MY CHARGE
THESE PAGES

ARE

I N S C R I B E D,

AS A MEMENTO OF CHRISTIAN LOVE, ACCOMPANIED
WITH MANY PRAYERS, THAT,

BY THE HOLY SPIRIT'S GRACE,
THEY MAY WALK IN THE TRUTH HOLILY, HOLD FAST
THE TRUTH FIRMLY, AND PROMOTE THE TRUTH
ZEALOUSLY, BEING

"STEADFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN
THE WORK OF THE LORD,"

BY THEIR SINCERELY AND FONDLY ATTACHED
MINISTER AND PASTOR,

OCTAVIUS WINSLOW.

THE SILVER TRUMPET,

&c. &c.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. * * * When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward.”—Num. x. 1, 2, 5.

WHAT a deep and precious mine of Gospel truth is God's most blessed Word! It has pleased Him in giving this perfect and glorious revelation of His mind and will to man, that the richest veins should lie far below the surface. In other words, with a view of guarding us against a superficial acquaintance with the Scriptures, and to encourage and reward our profound and prayerful research, some of the sublimest revelations of Himself, some of the most glorious exhibitions of Jesus, and some of the most instructive and admonitory, comforting and sanctifying truths are deeply veiled in the types or dimly shadowed in the ceremonies of the Old Testament economy. Beheld with a Jewish eye, their significance and their beauty are but partially and imperfectly seen. But viewed through the

B

glass of the Gospel—the wondrous telescope which brings out from their hidden glory the numerous and bright constellations of that twilight dispensation—they at once appear rich with the truth and resplendent with the glory of Immanuel, whom to see is to love, and “whom to know is life eternal.”

In the former dispensation we find frequent and marked allusion made to the employment of *trumpets* in the service and worship of God by the Jews. The occasions on which they were used were various and interesting. Trumpets directed the marchings of the Israelites—sounded the onset to battle—announced the tidings and proclaimed the joys of victory—and summoned to the solemn assemblies. There was the “feast of trumpets,” observed on the first day of the civil year, when, from the morning until the evening, they sounded over the sacrifices thus ushering in that important period amid circumstances of great and imposing solemnity. We may also refer to “the trumpet of the jubilee,” as marking a most interesting and deeply significant occasion on which they were employed. Every fiftieth year, the “acceptable year of the Lord,”¹ on the day of atonement, and while the people were engaged in fasting and afflicting themselves

¹ Isaiah Lxi. 2.

before God, this trumpet sounded throughout all the land, announcing, at every blast, tidings the most joyous and welcome. It proclaimed relaxation from all servile work, the earth during that period needing no culture, but spontaneously and abundantly yielding its increase, of which all alike were allowed freely to partake. It announced, too, the discharge of every insolvent debtor—the release of every bond servant—the restoration of property, and the universal enjoyment of harmony and rest. Defective indeed must be that eye, veiled that mind that sees not in all this, that which was typical of a far more glorious jubilee proclaimed through all the world—the glad tidings, the joyful sound of the Gospel proclaiming the discharge of the great debt to Divine Justice, our releasement from the bondage of sin and Satan, heaven restored, and joy and peace and rest succeeding, all flowing to us, through the cross of God's dear Son.

From the various uses of the trumpet among the Jews, we have selected a single one, as affording an illustration, if not a type, of the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God," deeply significant and instructive. Dismissing any further allusion to the primary ends for which these trumpets were employed, we proceed now to a solemn consideration

of the spiritual truth which this particular one is intended to convey. There are two points before us worthy of our regard: the spiritual import, first, of the trumpets, and then of the occasions on which they were blown.

Let us first direct our attention to the trumpets themselves. You will observe in the very outset the fact from which the subject derives its dignity and solemnity, viz. *these trumpets were of Divine construction and appointment.* They originated not with Moses, placed though he was at the head and appointed as the legislator of Israel. They were not to stand indebted to human conception or skill. The Lord himself was to have the glory of their origin. "And the Lord spake unto Moses." It is a circumstance worthy of our especial remark, that of every thing constructed by the instrumentality of his servants, and designed by God as a type of Gospel blessings, He has invariably retained to Himself the glory of having originated the idea and provided the model. Thus to Noah, God gave the plan of the Ark, to Moses that of the Tabernacle, and to Solomon that of the Temple. Nothing was left for their ingenuity to suggest, or their afterthought to supply. Not a beam, nor a nail, nor a thread, but God provided, adjusting it, in His

infinite mind, to its proper place. "See," saith he to Moses, "that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the Mount." For the spiritual meaning of this remarkable fact in Jewish history, turn to Paul's epistle to the Galatians: "I certify you, brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." The great and distinctive truth thus so broadly, emphatically, and impressively stated, is, the *Divinity of the Gospel*—a truth, in the firm and practical belief of which the church of God needs to be established. The Gospel is the master-work of Jehovah, presenting the greatest display of His "manifold wisdom," and the most costly exhibition of the riches of His grace. In constructing it, He would seem to have summoned to His aid all the resources of His own infinity—His fathomless mind, His boundless love, His illimitable grace, His infinite power, His spotless holiness—all contributed their glory and conspired to present it to the universe as the most consummate piece of divine workmanship. It carries with it its own evidence. The revelations it makes, the facts it records, the doctrines it propounds, the effects it produces, speak it to be no "cunningly

devised fable" of human invention and fraud, but what it truly is, the "revelation of Jesus Christ," the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." What but a heart of infinite love could have conceived the *desire* of saving sinners? And by what but an infinite mind could the expedient have been devised of saving them *in such a way*—the incarnation, obedience, and death of His own beloved Son?—Salvation from first to last is of the Lord. Here we occupy high vantage ground. Our feet stand upon an everlasting rock. We feel that we press to our heart that which is *truth*—that we have staked our souls upon that which is *divine*—that Deity is the basis on which we build, and that the hope which the belief of the truth has inspired will never make ashamed. O how comforting, how sanctifying, is the conviction that the Bible is God's Word, that the Gospel is Christ's revelation, and that all that it declares is as true as Jehovah Himself is true. What a stable foundation for our souls is this! We live encircled by shadows. Our friends are shadows—our comforts are shadows—our resources are shadows—our defences are shadows—our pursuits are shadows—and we ourselves are shadows passing away. "For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time .

and then vanisheth away." But in the precious Gospel we have substance, we have reality, we have that which remains with us when all other things disappear, leaving the soul desolate, the heart bleeding, and the spirit bowed in sorrow to the dust. It peoples our lonely way, because it points us to a "cloud of witnesses." It guides our perplexities, because it is a "lamp to our feet." It mitigates our grief, sanctifies our sorrows, heals our wounds, dries our tears, because it leads us to the love, the tenderness, the sympathy, the grace of JESUS. The Gospel reveals Jesus, speaks mainly of Jesus, leads simply to Jesus, and this makes it what it is, "glad tidings of great joy" to a poor, lost, ruined, tried, and tempted sinner.

We may for a moment still further pursue this idea. What but the conviction that she was propagating truth—divine, ascertained, attested truth—has constrained the Church of God to address herself to the great work of its dissemination among all nations? Vast has been her opposition, overwhelming her difficulties, costly her expenditure, and immense her sacrifices; and yet, undaunted and undismayed, she has gone forth into all the world, preaching the Gospel to every creature.

And to what but the divinity of its nature are

we to attribute the miraculous success which has hitherto attended its propagation? Systems of religious opinion have risen, flourished for a while, then languished and disappeared. But the Gospel, the most ancient, as it is the most sublime of all, has outlived all other systems. It has beheld the rise and the fall of many, and yet it remains. What religion has ever encountered the fierce and persevering opposition which Christianity has? Professed friends have endeavoured to corrupt and betray it. Avowed enemies have sworn utterly to annihilate it. Kings and legislatures have sought to arrest its progress and to banish it from the earth. The fires of persecution have consumed its sanctuaries and its preachers; and behold! it yet lives! The 'divinity within' has kept it. He who dwelt in the bush has preserved it. Where are the French encyclopedists—the men of deep learning, and brilliant genius, and moving eloquence, and caustic wit, and untiring energy, who banded themselves together with a vow to exterminate Christ and Christianity? Where is the eloquent Rousseau, and the witty Voltaire, and the ingenious Helvetius, and the sophistical Hume, and the scoffing D'Alembert, and the ribaldist Paine? Their names have rotted from the earth, and their works

follow them. And where is the Saviour whom they sought to annihilate? Enthroned in glory, robed in majesty, and exalted a Prince and a Saviour, encircled, worshipped and adored by countless myriads of holy beings, the crown of Deity on his head, and the sceptre of universal government in his hand, from whose tribunal they have passed, tried, sentenced, and condemned, while he yet lives

“ To guard his church and crush his foes.”

And where is the Gospel which they confederated and thought to overthrow? Pursuing its widening way of mercy through the world; borne on the wings of every wind and on the crest of every billow to the remotest ends of the earth, destroying the fanes and casting down the idols of heathenism, supplanting superstition and idolatry with Christian sanctuaries and Christian churches; softening down the harshness of human barbarism, turning the instruments of cruelty into implements of husbandry; above all, and the grandest of all its results, proclaiming to the poorest, neediest, vilest of our race, SALVATION—full, free salvation by Christ—the pardon of the greatest sins by His atoning blood; the covering of the greatest deformity and unworthiness by his justifying righteousness, and the opening of the kingdom of heaven to

all that believe. Thus is the glorious Gospel now blessing the world. It goes and effaces the stains of human guilt, it gives ease to the burthened conscience, rest to the labouring spirit, the sweetest comfort under the deepest sorrow, dries the mourner's tear, exchanges the "garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness,"¹ and all because it speaks of—**JESUS**. O this Gospel were no glad tidings, it were no good news, did it not testify of Jesus the Saviour. He that sees not Christ the sum, the substance, the wisdom, the power of the Gospel, is blind to the real glory of the word. He that has never tasted the love of Jesus, is yet a stranger to the sweetness of the truth.

Yes! the Gospel is divine! it of God's own creation. He gave the word, and great is the company of them that preach it. Infidelity may oppose, and infidels may scorn it; false professors may betray, and sworn enemies may assail it; yet it will survive, as it has done, the fiercest assault of man and of devils; like the burning bush it will outlive the flame, and like the rock of the ocean it will tower above the storm, God, who originated and who guards it, exclaiming to all their rage, "hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

¹ Isaiah LXI. 4.

Second. Observe the metal of which the Lord commanded these trumpets to be composed. They were to be "trumpets of *silver*." It was a precious, costly, and beautiful metal. The spiritual import of this is strikingly significant. In what an obvious point of view does it place the *value*, *preciousness*, and *glory* of the Gospel. How shall we adequately set this forth? Do we look upon the Gospel as a *national* blessing? Who can estimate its value? Take this away, and our true greatness as a nation vanishes. Blot this out, and the true glory of our land is gone. The strength, stability, and glory of Britain consists not in her rock-bound coast, walling her in on every side; nor in her bristling fortresses, bidding a stern defiance to her foes; nor in her powerful navy, floating in proud dignity upon the waves, the mistress of the sea; nor in her invincible army, carrying war and conquest to the remotest ends of the earth, adding continent to continent to her already gigantic and unwieldy possessions; nor in the success of her commercial enterprise, sweeping into her lap the riches of the world; nor in the wisdom of her legislators, the eloquence of her statesmen, the learning of her philosophers, the flowing numbers of her bards. No! The true glory of Britain is her possession of

the Gospel of Christ, planted and preached within her borders. Here is her real beauty, her shield, and her defence. This once gone, you may write "Ichabod" upon all her remaining greatness, for her true glory will have departed.

And is there nothing in the movements that are around us to awaken apprehension and alarm? Is not the stability of the Gospel, the possession of this priceless blessing, at the present moment, jeopardized? Is there nothing in the great increase of Popery, and of simi-popery, with its train of false doctrines, superstitious observances, and dead religion, calculated to remind us of the Apostle's warning, "This know also that in the last days *perilous times* shall come?" Prediction is becoming fact; prophecy is becoming history. We have entered upon the last age of the world, and 'perilous times' are indeed coming. We cannot, we dare not close our eyes upon the fact, that the pure, unadulterated truth is now receding from us in rapid and fearful strides. The glory of our land is waning. All things are ripening for a change. Blessed are they who will be found to have held fast Christ's name, and not to have denied his faith. They shall walk with him in white, for they are worthy.

But considered as an *individual* blessing, how

precious and priceless is the Gospel of our blessed Lord. Contemplated in its relation to us as sinners, and in the solemn light of eternity, how appropriate and blessed are its revelations. The Gospel is literally a proclamation of God's free mercy to man as fallen, miserable, and condemned. Divested of its Saxon dress, the word signifies Good-news, Glad Tidings. Truly does it merit and sustain this cheering definition. There is nothing in the Gospel but what is joyful, cheering, soothing, encouraging, inviting to a poor, lost sinner. Not one harsh note, not one repelling sound floats from this silver trumpet. If to unfold the glorious and precious scheme of redeeming mercy, founded in the eternal purpose of God, fully developed and executed by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ—and then applied to the heart by the effectual and invincible power of the Holy Spirit's illuminating and converting grace, then is it glad tidings of great joy. If to proclaim the free pardon of all sin through the precious blood of Jesus—unconditional and irreversible justification from all things through his imputed righteousness—the gift of the Holy Ghost to quicken, enlighten, sanctify, and comfort all the children of God; the faithfulness of God and the immutability of His

love to His people—the assurance of His covenant that they shall not depart from Him, but that through all the intricacies and temptations of the way He will keep them as the apple of his eye—that Jesus, as a “Priest upon his throne,” is engaged in ceaseless intercession on their behalf while they are surrounded by the fatigues of the travel, the dangers of the conflict, or the difficulties of the way; presenting himself before God, their names engraved on his breastplate and borne upon his ephod—and that soon he will return again, encircled by his glorified saints, and complete the number of his elect, gathering them from among all people, presenting them to his Father a “glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing”¹—then is the Gospel good-news from heaven.

Sweet and melodious is the sound of this silver trumpet, as it falls upon the ear of a poor, heart-broken sinner. And what think you, dear reader, is its most mellifluous note? *Salvation by grace!* Salvation by Christ alone, through faith in his blood, for the vilest sinner, “without money and without price.”² If to this glorious and stupendous scheme of redemption there were ought appended to be performed by the creature—if convictions of sin

¹ Ephesians v. 27.

² Isaiah LV. 1.

—if tears of sorrow—if works of obedience—if repenting and believing were grounds or conditions on the performance of which God's forgiveness, and Christ's atonement, and the Spirit's grace were bestowed, then this silver trumpet, changing its note, would cease to be a "*joyful* sound." Were I to repair to the condemned cell of the criminal awaiting the extreme punishment of the law, and proffer to him the royal pardon upon terms with which, circumstanced as he was, it were an utter impossibility for him to comply, my message would be but a cruel mockery of his woe. But let me assure him, on the warrant bearing the royal seal and signature, of a *free pardon*—springing spontaneously from the compassionate heart of the sovereign—no other condition to perform than to accept the boon, to avail himself of the mercy, and to pass out, the door unlocked, the bars cast down, the prison-house opened by the king himself, then, O *then* do I light up his dark cell with radiance, kindle his desolate heart with joy, and sound a note upon his ear

“In sweeter strains than angels use.”

Then do I convey to him glad tidings indeed!

This is the Gospel! In it, Jesus speaks; and what saith he? “The Spirit of the Lord God is

upon me ; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”¹ O what silver tones of sweetness are here ! Listen to another strain—“By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God.”² Yet another—“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”³ With these announcements, the Gospel visits the prison-house of a poor, convinced soul, under the curse and condemnation of the law. It tells him that vile, lost, condemned, and justly so, though he is, the King has given his only begotten Son to die for those that ‘were without strength,’ for ‘sinners, for the ‘chief of sinners,’ for the ‘ungodly.’ That believing in the Lord Jesus Christ he shall be saved. That accepting this salvation as a free gift, he shall be washed, clothed, adopted, and introduced into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Dear reader, does not your whole soul bound with joy at this sound ? Were ever strains so sweet, was ever sound so melodious, were ever announcements so

¹ Isaiah LXI. 1, 2. ² Ephesians II. 8. ³ Romans III. 24.

great ? Drawing near to this sin-hating yet this sin-pardoning God, in the name and pleading the righteousness of Jesus, His oath assures you He will not cast you out, but will save you to the *uttermost*. O what an exalted view does this salvation give us of Jesus ! That he should have loved poor sinners so—that he should have died for poor sinners thus—that he should so fully, so freely, so lovingly pardon, accept, and welcome *all* that come to him, despising, refusing, rejecting none, bow low my heart before him, and yield to him thy sweetest, deepest, holiest, supremest homage and affection !

But as a source of the richest *consolation*, how precious is the Gospel in its individual adaptation. It meets all the cases, and bends itself to all the circumstances of human suffering. There is not a form of sorrow which it cannot suit—nor a grief which it cannot sooth—nor a wound which it cannot heal—nor a tear which it cannot dry. What a “cloud of witnessess” are now bending from their thrones in glory, all testifying to the mighty power of the Gospel to absorb the deepest sorrow that has ever stung the human heart.

“ Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears ;

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They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.

“ I ask them whence their victory came,
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to his death.”

But the church below has, too, its witnesses. Let the children of domestic woe, from whom the Lord has taken the councillor and the support, testify how the widow's heart has sung for joy, and the orphan's eye has gleamed with gladness through its tears as the promise has broken upon the ear—“ Leave thy fatherless children with me; I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.”¹ Let the mourners in Zion testify of the gladness inspired by the words—“ The Lord hath sent me to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.”² Let those whom the bereavement of friends, the loss of property, the pinchings of want, the corrodings of care, the pressure of trial, and the cruel mocking of bitter persecution for Christ's sake, have bowed in sorrow and humiliation in the dust, testify how a single promise contained in this Gospel, spoken to their heart by the Comforter, has soothed, and

¹ Jeremiah XLIX. 11.

² Isaiah LXI. 1, 3.

composed, and reconciled, as none but this Gospel could do. And let the faithful ministers of this Gospel, accustomed to repair to the house of mourning, and to the chamber of sickness, and to the bed of death, testify, and how many, as with one voice, will exclaim, as one has done, — “*I have seen* this Gospel hush into a calm the tempest raised in the bosom by conscious guilt.—*I have seen* it melt down the most obdurate into tenderness and contrition.—*I have seen* it cheer up the broken hearted, and bring the tear of gladness into eyes swollen with grief.—*I have seen* it produce and maintain serenity under evils which drive the worldling mad.—*I have seen* it reconcile the sufferer to his cross, and send the song of praise from his lips quivering with agony.—*I have seen* it enable the most affectionate relatives to part in death, not without emotion, but without repining, and with a cordial surrender of all that they held most dear, to the disposal of their heavenly Father.—*I have seen* the fading eye brighten at the promise of Jesus, ‘Where I am there shall my servant be also.’ *I have seen* the faithful spirit released from its clay, now mildly, now triumphantly, to enter into the joy of its Lord.” And all this consolation springing from the ocean of Christ’s deep sympathy

and love, and flowing through the channel of the Gospel. O there could possibly have been no chain of sympathy from God to the creature, but as He took upon Him our nature, so linking himself with those very sufferings which it is now his sweet delight to sooth and alleviate. "God was manifest in the flesh." "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

But not only as supplying doctrine and consolation is the Gospel a source of untold blessing to the individual believer. The trumpet of the Gospel as clearly proclaims the obligation of the *precept* that *sanctifies*, as it does the doctrine that establishes, and the promise that comforts. He that has experimentally received the doctrines of grace in his heart, and has tasted the comfort that flows from the promises, will desire as fervently to live in the fear of God, to hate all sin, to desire and seek after universal holiness, "denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living godly, righteously, and soberly in this present evil world." O glorious spectacle, to see one thus pressing after God! That he shall attain unto this perfect holiness while in this body of sin, he expects not; yet making it, and nothing lower, the goal towards which he aspires, and the point to which he would fain arrive, he

“forgets those things which are behind, and reaches forth unto those things which are before, pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” O, with what melody do the precepts of God and the commands of Jesus sound in the ears of such an one, desiring, from a principle of holiness and of love implanted in his heart, to “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

These trumpets were to be composed of *one entire piece of silver*. “Of a whole piece shalt thou make them.” They were to form one solid mass of pure metal. There is something deeply significant in this part of the instruction which God gave to Moses. It sets forth the perfect harmony and beautiful symmetry of the Gospel as a whole, describing also its pure, unmixed, and unalloyed nature. The perfect harmony of the Gospel, its beautiful consistency with itself, is a feature of loveliness on which the spiritual eye, disciplined to proportion, delights to dwell. God is a God of order, and not of confusion. He is light, and in him is no darkness at all. Where shall we look for a more complete illustration of this truth than in the Gospel which He has communicated to His intelligent creatures ?

Here, His love of order shines out in surpassing grandeur. The Gospel constitutes one grand, systematic, and harmonious whole, each part so nicely adjusted to, and dependant upon, another, that the whole is more or less deranged by the influence which affects any one part. So complete, so symmetrical is it as a whole, and so closely bound together are its parts by mutual dependencies and affinities, that you cannot do violence to one, but you do violence to all. Injure a single member of the body, and, "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," so perfect is the human structure as a whole, and so sympathetic is each part with the other. Pluck the sun from the universe, and you destroy the centre of attraction which holds in firm, yet gentle sway, all the parts of the solar system. Or, blot out but a single satellite, and you disturb the balance, derange the harmony, and defeat the end of the whole.

Is the Gospel of Christ less perfect, or less glorious? Nay; but so harmonious is it as a whole, so well balanced, and so mutually dependant one upon the other are its parts, that no doctrine can be denied, no precept can be obscured, no fact can be disputed, no statement can be withheld, without diminishing, if not utterly destroying, its power,

and so defeating the end for which it was revealed. Take the doctrines of the being of God—original sin—the Deity of Christ—the Atonement—the Divine personality of the Spirit—the providence and the sovereignty of God,—blot out from the Bible any one of these truths, and you obscure the glory and neutralize the effect of all the others. That the Gospel should be so, we wonder not, coming, as it does, from Him who is essentially Truth. We take up the writings, or we listen to the preaching of men, the best, the wisest, the holiest of men, and we enquire, “Is it all silver? is it all gold? is it a perfect whole? Is there no mixture, no alloy, no flaw, nothing to mark the defiling hand of man? Is there not a want of harmony, of proper proportion in the statement of truth? Is not undue prominence given to some favourite doctrines or precepts, while others, equally valuable, important, and obligatory, are shaded and obscured, if not entirely omitted? Is there nothing often in the manner of setting forth precious truth sometimes degrading to the very truth itself, and equally offensive to the taste of those who read?” But not so is the glorious Gospel of Jesus. It is truth, all truth, unmixed with the alloy of error, untouched with the taint of corruption. Here is no

dross, no tinsel; nothing to mislead the mind, ensnare the soul, or peril the eternal interests of man. O sweet, tenfold sweet, in this day of awful corruption of God's word, is the thought, that, laying aside the obscure and bewildering writings of man, we may repair to Christ's Gospel with the fullest confidence of finding no light that leads astray, no discordance of statement, not a grain of base metal tending to impair the mellowness and melody of its sound. All doctrines essential to the salvation, all precepts necessary to the holiness, and all promises needful for the consolation of man, are here clearly and symmetrically revealed. God, in the plenitude of his love, has given to us a full Gospel, a complete revelation. Here He has recorded every perfection of His being. Here He has opened the arcana of His heart, leaving not a single treasure of His love undiscovered. In nothing has He so gloriously revealed Himself, and in nothing may He be so fully known, implicitly trusted, and highly praised, as in His Gospel. Designed as the instrument of publishing to mankind salvation by Christ, it must needs be a perfect masterpiece of God. A single flaw would mar its beauty, a solitary discrepancy would weaken our confidence in it, and the slightest error would neutralize all its blessed effects.

Come, then, ye who hunger and thirst for happiness. Come ye whose grand enquiry is, "What is truth?" Come ye who are in search of a perfect religion, a spotless righteousness, a complete salvation! Come ye who have been disappointed and wearied, misled and bewildered by human teaching! Come, drink of the pure wine, enrich yourselves with the pure silver, and gladden your souls with the sweet sound of this "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." Bending your knees before its sacred leaves, in earnest and fervent prayer for the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, you may safely trust yourself to its light and guidance. Never will it betray your confidence or disappoint your hope. Bring to it your ignorance, it will enlighten you; your perplexities, it will guide you; your infirmities, it will sanctify you; your trials, it will support you; your bereavements, it will comfort you. O thou Divine balm of all my wounds! thou infallible catholicon of all my maladies! thou sweet solace of all my cares! thou dear and precious companion of my lonely and difficult way! sweetening my solitude, lightening my cares, and soothing my sorrows, thou givest me the promise of the life that now is, and thou dost unfold to me

¹ 1 Timothy I. 11.

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the glorious and certain prospect of the life which is to come !

“ Should all the forms that men devise
Assault my faith with treacherous art,
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart.”

If, then, the Gospel is given to us as in itself a perfect and complete whole, *it is in like manner to be preached*. No statement must be omitted, no doctrine must be suppressed, no precept must be veiled, no command must be withheld. The Gospel *as a whole* is to be proclaimed. The taste, experience, and attainments of our hearers are to be consulted only as they may suggest the most efficient mode of bringing the Gospel, in all its fulness, to bear upon their souls. Does the eye of any minister of Christ light upon this page ? Dear, honoured servant of the Lord ! permit me to remind you, as I would myself, of the dying regret of the heavenly-minded Cecil, that in the course of his ministry he had not given the same prominence to some important parts of divine truth which he had to others.* Beloved brethren, we occupy

* “ I was formerly well acquainted with two worthy persons in the ministry,” says a distinguished divine, “ who were eminently pious and extensively useful. I thought that if ever any men in the world were faithful to the light

most solemn ground. We stand beneath the most oppressive and fearful responsibilities. Our commission commands us to go into all the world, and preach *the Gospel* to every creature, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever our Divine Master has commanded. It admits of no compromise. Human opinion is to weigh nought with us. What man shall think or say of us, light as air. To be

God had given them, these were. And yet, in their last illness, they had such a feeling sight of their past unfaithfulness, as almost reduced them, for a time, to a despair of salvation. One of them said he 'only wished to live that he might have an opportunity of preaching the Gospel in a fuller manner than he had ever yet done.' The other cried out in an agony of distress, 'God hides the light of his face from my soul, and is putting me to bed in the dark, because, out of a dastardly complaisance to some of my hearers, I have not dwelt enough upon the doctrines of grace, in the course of my public ministrations;' instancing particularly the doctrine of election, 'in which doctrine,' added he, 'I now see such a glory as I never saw before.' Yet both were good men, and went off comfortably at last; though not until they had been led through a tedious, dismal wilderness of keen remorse and distressing conflicts. Such as suppress and keep back any part of Christian doctrine, either through fear of men, or to curry the favour of men, and consult their own ease, advancement, or reputation, at the cost of truth and of souls, have a tremendous valley of pain and horror to pass through, ere they reach the kingdom of heaven. If saved at all, it will be as by fire."

judged of man's judgments is to be to us a very little thing. Not to our hearers are we responsible, but to God. It solemnly behoves us, then, to "study to shew ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the word of truth."¹ At our peril, no mystery is to be kept back because we cannot solve it—no statement withheld because we cannot reconcile it—no doctrine shaded because we cannot explain it—no course of Christian experience veiled because we have not travelled it,—but the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the "truth as it is in Jesus,"² is to be preached by us fully, faithfully, and affectionately. Can we, dare we, shade or withhold any part of God's word, assuming to ourselves the prerogative of determining what is fit and what is not fit, what is safe and what is not safe, to be preached? Shall *we* take the word out of the hands of the Spirit, and deal it out as we judge best? God forbid!

With equal care it behoves us to guard against *adding anything to this Gospel*. Here the snare is equally great, and many, alas! have fallen into it. Whatever of man's invention, of human tradition, of vain philosophy, of false doctrine or precept, is

¹ 2 Timothy II. 15.

² Ephesians IV. 21.

added to the Gospel of Christ, shades its glory, impairs its power, and neutralizes its effects. Beware of tampering with God's most holy word. Beware of preaching "another Gospel."¹ Remember the solemn anathema suspended over the head of him—an angel though he were—who dares to subvert the true Gospel of Christ, either by taking from it any particle of God's revelation, or by adding to it any thing of man's teaching. "I marvel," says the intrepid Apostle, writing to the churches of Galatia, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another Gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."² The words with which the sacred canon closes are yet more explicit and solemn: "If any man shall *add* unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book. And if any man shall *take away* from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life."³

¹ 2 Corinthians XI. 4.

² Galatians I. 6—8.

³ Revelations XXII. 18, 19.

Brethren, our solemn responsibility to preach the *whole* truth extends not merely to the doctrines set forth in the public standards to which we have subscribed; it is limited only by the Bible itself. The great question—before which all others dwindle into insignificance—is, “What does the Word of God teach?” His vows are upon us. His eye is upon us. His Gospel is in our hands. Souls are committed to our care—souls whose eternal destiny is closely connected with our teaching! The truths we are commissioned to declare are not points of idle curiosity, or barren speculation. Far from it. They are the greatest, the grandest, the most momentous that ever shed their lustre upon the human mind, or fell in burning eloquence from human lips. Were an angel suddenly to appear in our pulpit, he could not utter revelations more solemn or sublime than those which *our* lips are anointed to proclaim. O how deep the guilt which we should incur, and how deserving the contempt which we should merit, were we, from sinister motives of honour, interest, or applause, to temporize in holy things, and so disjoint the body of Christian doctrine by a partial unfolding, or shade and disguise it by artificial obscurity or wilful misrepresentation. “He that hath my word, let him speak

my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord."¹ "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully."² "Do I seek," says the Apostle, "to please men? for if I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."³ O that with him, in his departure to Jerusalem, surrounded by the weeping pastors of Ephesus, we may be enabled to say, on our departure to glory, surrounded by our weeping flocks, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you *all the counsel* of God."⁴

The *two trumpets*—the number appointed by the Lord—set forth the two Testaments of the Old and New dispensations. It is worthy of our most serious consideration, and we would press it as an argument with the unbeliever in the divinity of the Bible, that in the two Testaments, both avowedly the Word of God, there is the most perfect agreement, congruity, and harmony in the revelation which they make of JESUS. Both conspire to set Him forth as the incarnate God, as the great Saviour of lost sinners. Both sweetly blend their voices in testifying of Him in the divinity of his person—

¹ Jeremiah **xxiii.** 28.

² Jeremiah **xlvi.** 10.

³ Galatians **i.** 10.

⁴ Acts **xx.** 26, 27.

in the greatness of his love—in the glory of his work—in the efficacy of his blood—in the freeness of his grace—in the tenderness of his compassion—and in the readiness with which he receives and the cordiality with which he welcomes every broken heart, every burthened soul, every disconsolate spirit. O what sounds of joy, think ye, would float from these silver trumpets of God's most blessed Word, did they not announce free forgiveness and full acceptance through the divine merits and sacrificial work of Jesus ?

The second branch of this subject includes **THE OCCASIONS** on which the Lord commanded these trumpets to be blown. And here an important truth meets us at the outset. The Gospel of Christ is to be *preached*. No other institution, nor instrumentality for the diffusion of divine truth, can supersede the *preaching* of the word. Valuable as is the press, important and useful as are other agencies, God has appointed the ministry of the word as the grand instrumentality of saving men. "It pleased him by the foolishness of *preaching* to save them that believe."¹ "Go ye into all the world, and *preach* the Gospel to every creature."² It was by the preaching of the word that the first

¹ 1 Corinthians i. 21.

² Mark xvi. 15.

propagation of the truth was so signally successful in converting pagan nations to Christianity. It was the preaching of the Gospel which achieved our emancipation from the thralldom of Popery, and gave to us that glorious Reformation the blessings of which we cannot too devoutly acknowledge, too highly prize, or too vigilantly guard. And let the Christian pastors of our land testify, as truly they may, that the great body of converts to the faith whom their hands have introduced within the pale of the church of God, were individually called to a knowledge of the truth by the simple *preaching* of the truth. Permit nothing, my reader, to lower your views of this divinely appointed and sublimely simple mode of calling into the church a people taken out of the world. Other agencies God graciously adopts; but they are rather auxiliary, indirect, and preparatory, and should ever be considered as occupying a subordinate place to the exposition of the Word and the preaching of the Gospel by the living teacher. Let us be cautious of lightly esteeming that which God has so wisely ordained and so signally blessed.

But another and an important question follows upon this, viz.—By **WHOM** is the trumpet of the Gospel to be blown? **WHO** are the trumpeters of

the church? God has taken this part of the work exclusively and manifestly in His own hands. He has not seen fit to commit this costly instrument to any and every one; but has appointed an order of men whom by His grace He has taken out of the world, and by His Spirit has called out of His church, clothing them with authority, endowing them with gifts, and sanctifying them with grace for the great work of unfolding the mysteries of the Gospel. Thus has He instituted the **CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**, the highest office in His church, apart from which no church can be complete. It will not suffice to meet the designs of Christ in the formation of Christian churches, that there are "gatherings" of the saints in small parties, in obscure places, and in irresponsible forms—without a pastor¹—without an overseer²—without officers³—without Gospel order⁴—without holy discipline⁵—without a proper, authorised, and constant oversight⁶. Such collections of believers, as *substitutes* for distinct Gospel churches, however spiritual and edifying the object of their meeting together may be supposed to be, are contrary to the Scriptures of truth, are opposed to the New Testament order of Chris-

¹ Eph. iv. 11.² Acts xx. 28.³ Philip. i. 1.⁴ 1 Cor. xiv. 40.⁵ 2 Thess. iii. 6.⁶ Heb. xiii. 7.

tian churches, and tend to throw contempt upon the Word of God, to shade the light, and impair the holy influence of Christians. To this point we shall again recur.

But to the "law and to the testimony."¹ "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,"² by the word of truth. Pressing the *necessity* of the Christian Ministry, the inspired Apostle thus speaks: "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"³ Was ever reasoning more clear, or argument more convincing on any point than is this? Again. The same Apostle, in another place, exclusively speaking of the Christian Ministry, thus writes. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. * * * And he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some,

¹ Isaiah VIII. 20.

² Rev. II. 7.

³ Romans X. 14, 15.

evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; of the perfecting of the saints, *for the work of the Ministry*, for the edifying of the body of Christ."¹ By what rule of interpretation, or by what law of exposition these passages can be made to signify more or less than they do, must embarrass even the ingenious spirit of error to conceive. O how does God's Word explode the airy notions of man! How quickly and how utterly do his splendid, imposing, and plausible chimeras vanish before the lightening touch of the Holy Spirit's truth!

Thus is it evident from the Word of God that He has instituted the CHRISTIAN MINISTRY, which office, by a constant succession of divinely-called and holy men, he perpetuates in his church, whose specific and great work it is, to blow the trumpet of the Gospel.

The first occasion on which the Lord commanded this trumpet to be used was, *for the "calling of the assembly."* What is the first great design of a preached Gospel? The calling in of a hidden people—the gathering together of the outcasts of Israel. A people by nature "dead in trespasses and in sins"—"children of wrath, even as other"—"without God and without Christ in

¹ Ephesians 7, 8, 11, 12.

the world." The blowing of this silver trumpet is to proclaim salvation to such. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish."¹ "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."² The preaching of the word in the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost is God's great and most effectual instrument of thus calling in His hidden ones. There they lie in the great mass of fallen, unregenerate nature, "ready to perish," as unregenerate, as careless, as prayerless, as Christless as others. But they are his people. He has chosen them, He has loved them with an everlasting love, He has preserved them in Christ Jesus, and now by the proclamation of the Gospel He calls them to a knowledge of the truth. The great trumpet is blown and they are quickened, they move, they arise, they come. They "come with weeping and with supplication," they come with brokenness and contrition, with mourning and confession. They come in all their poverty and wretchedness, vileness and guilt. They lie low be-

¹ Isaiah xxvii. 13.

² Isaiah lv. 1.

neath the cross, they smite on their breasts and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner." In them is fulfilled the precious promise, "All that the Father giveth me *shall* come to me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—Reader, can *you* not testify to the truth of this? You entered within the walls of the sanctuary "ready to perish." You came, you knew not why. A friend, perhaps, persuaded you; or a motive of curiosity drew you; yet you came, hating God, despising Christ, ignorant of yourself. The silver trumpet was blown; you listened! O, never did sounds so strange break upon your ear before! It spoke *to* you, it spoke *of* you. It described your character, unveiled your heart, detected your sins, brought to light your iniquities, and fixed, as then you thought and felt, the burning gaze of the assembly upon you alone. It spoke of God's deep hatred of sin and of his solemn determination to punish it with the eternal infliction of his wrath. It described the present perilous condition and the final and appalling doom of the unbeliever and the impenitent. You trembled, you wept, you prayed. But it changed its theme. It spoke of a sin-pardoning, of a sinner-receiving God. It spoke of Jesus as a great and a glorious Saviour. It un-

folded the story of his dying love—it spoke of Gethsemane, and of Calvary, how there he loved, and sorrowed, and mourned, bled, and died, for poor, lost sinners, “ready to perish.” O how precious were the announcements, and how balmy the truths which now, in silver tones, broke upon your believing ear. The name of Jesus! it was music unutterably sweet. Faith in Jesus! it was a way of salvation inimitably suitable. Acceptance in Jesus! it was a way of peace unspeakably glorious. With transporting joy you welcomed the glad tidings, you drank in the joyful sound of full and free redemption, of reconciliation with God, of adoption into his family, and a hope laid up for you in heaven through the finished work of the incarnate God. And now, calling to mind that blissful period, how expressive of your feelings are the words of the Christian poet:—

“ That was a time of wondrous love,
When Christ my Lord was passing by;
He felt his tender pity move,
And brought his great salvation nigh.

“ Guilty and self-condemned I stood,
Nor thought his mercy was so near;
When he my stubborn heart subdued,
And planted all his graces there.

“ When on the verge of endless pain,
He gently whispered ‘ I am thine ;’
I lost my fears and dropped my chain,
And felt a transport all divine.”

The journeyings of the Camp presented another occasion on which the Lord commanded the trumpets to be sounded. This was deeply interesting and significant. Contemplate its spiritual meaning. The people of God are in a pilgrimage state. They are travelling through a great and terrible wilderness to the promised land. What directs their marches, guides their journeyings, and cheers and sustains them in the way? The trumpet of the Gospel! Its doctrines establish, its precepts guide, its promises uphold, its consolations cheer, its hopes animate them as they go ‘ from strength to strength,’ all to ‘ appear before God in Zion.’

Beloved reader, the great, the cheering, the sanctifying truth which the Gospel places before you in your pilgrimage is, that a covenant God and Father has mapped out your way, and is with you every step that you take towards the promised rest. You may find it an intricate and a difficult way—a waste howling wilderness—a toilsome and perilous pilgrimage; you may realize it to be a path of great tribulation, of deep and varied trial; sins and

snares, the roaring lion, 'principalities and powers,' and 'spiritual wickedness in high places' may spread their net and hem you in on every side; nevertheless, the 'Lion of the tribe of Judah' guards the way, and will conduct you in safety to its close. "He led them forth by the right way that they might go to a city of habitation." Jesus, the smitten rock, will cause the stream of his grace to follow you, strengthening, refreshing, and guiding you until you drink from the fountain in glory.

O, lend your ear to the guiding sound of the Gospel in all your journeyings. Stir not, advance not, until you have consulted your map and made yourself acquainted with the way in which the Lord would have you to walk. In every intricacy, perplexity, season of doubt and danger, forget not to "acknowledge the Lord in all thy ways, and He shall direct thy paths." Remember that all, and the utmost that you are to aim at, is, *to walk humbly with God*. That it is of little or no moment, comparatively, what your position in this life is, as to worldly advantage and greatness—whether you are rich or poor, learned or unlettered, of high or of low birth; whether men think much or little of you; whether your social, intellectual, and political position in society be

eminent or not; what party is in power and what is not; who governs or who does not govern—the single, the great, the solemn, the momentous business with which *you* have to do, as one nearing the eternal world, is, *to walk humbly with God*. O, as a Christian man, ‘seek not great things’ for yourself. As a pilgrim journeying to Canaan, be content to walk in a lowly path; court the shade. If God exalts you to eminence and power in the land, remember it is for His glory, and not your own. But seek it not. Use the distinction, the rank, the wealth, the influence which He gives you, solely, entirely, supremely for His glory. Guard vigilantly and pray earnestly against the snares which worldly greatness, affluence, and power entail upon their possessor. Ever let the question be uppermost in your mind, “How can I best promote the honour of God and the increase of Christ’s kingdom by this? Of what real value is this power, influence, property, if it is not employed for the glory and praise of God?” While studying to promote by your influence the good of society in general, have a tender regard to the interest of Christ’s flock in particular. It is often painful and humiliating to observe how some Christian professors, invested with temporal power, overlook the saints

of God, the representatives of Christ, in the exercise and distribution of that power. We judge not of motive, this is the prerogative of God alone. But the fact is too evident to admit of doubt, and too serious to escape censure. But, my reader, if the Lord, in his providence, has placed you upon a pinnacle of temporal power, it is not that you should cast yourself down from thence to mingle with the 'potsherds of the earth,' and so lay a suicidal hand upon the moral influence entrusted to your stewardship; but that while aiming for the glory of God as the great end of every act of your life, you should keep in mind the Holy Ghost's injunction, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, *especially* unto them who are of the household of faith;" coupling it with the cheering words of Jesus, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto *me*." O, then, repair to the Word of God for counsel and direction in all your journeyings to your Father's house. Make yourself acquainted with it even as the voyager studies his chart, and the traveller his map. Then shall the history of Israel be but the type of yours,— "The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert

land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." Christ will be your Leader, Christ your Pilot, Christ your Captain. He will be in the pillar of the cloud by day, screening you from the scorching heat of the sun; and he will be in the pillar of fire by night, to shield you from the noxious vapours of the desert. O, testify, for the glory of God, how, when "wearied in the greatness of your way," how, when faint and dispirited, your soul cast down within you, one blast of this silver trumpet has inspired you with new life; one sentence, perhaps a precept or a promise, of this precious Gospel, or perhaps it was but the name of Jesus, spoken to your heart by the Holy Ghost, has made plain your path, has dissipated your fears, has refreshed and revived your spirit, and sent you on your way "rejoicing in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh."

But not the least important use to which these trumpets were dedicated was, *to sound an alarm in the camp*. "When ye blow an ALARM, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward." The Gospel is the *alarm trumpet* of the Church. It is designed not merely to gather her outcasts, convene her solemn assemblies, and direct her

journeyings, but in an especial and most emphatic sense to *warn* her of any evil threatening her peace and safety. Thus does the Holy Ghost allude to it, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain." It is to be blown promptly, distinctly, faithfully. "For if," says the Apostle, "the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" The woe appended to an unfaithful discharge of this part of ministerial responsibility is most fearful: "Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. * * * But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand."

That we are fallen upon 'perilous times' who can

doubt, possessing in any degree an intelligent acquaintance with the signs and movements that are around us? If ever there was a period which demanded a full, faithful, clear, and uncompromising exhibition of Gospel truth, that period is the present. And if ever it solemnly behoved the watchmen of Zion to heed God's command, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins," it is *now*. Deeply impressed with the conviction of this, I proceed to address myself to the consideration of a most important part of my subject, viz. *to warn the Church of God against existing views and practices which greatly threaten its peace and prosperity.*

There exists at the present time, as the reader is probably aware, a section of the Christian Church, who have appropriated to themselves the style and title of the "Brethren;" but who perhaps are more generally known as the "Plymouth Brethren." Of the history of their origin as a sect, but little is known. It is said to have been founded in Geneva, in 1824, and in Ireland coterminously; but by whom does not distinctly appear. In calling especial attention to the sentiments and proceedings of this religious body, let it be distinctly and empha-

tically premised that as a part of the one family of God, as a community of believers in Jesus, holding him the Head, and honestly desiring to live to his honour and glory, I readily and affectionately recognize them. Let it be solemnly affirmed and clearly understood that I am not now opposing myself to the *enemies* of God and of Jesus, but to some of the views of those whom I love in the Lord, which appear, to my mind, opposed to his holy Word. That in union with them, as a Christian body, there are many eminent examples of heavenly-mindedness, humble walking with God, simple and unreserved surrender, it is my happiness from personal friendship and intercourse to know. To wash their feet, to imitate them as far as they are like Christ, I would esteem no small privilege; for "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report" that I see among them, I praise God and glorify his grace.

But nevertheless, as a community of professed believers, I have much, and of a serious nature, to alledge against them. As a Christian sect, believing them to occupy a position, and to entertain views, and in many of their operations to be actu-

ated by a spirit—doubtless sincere in its intention—but unscriptural, unlike the spirit of Jesus, and productive of immense evil in the Church of God and of much painful distress to His ministers, I am compelled, with the deepest reluctance, of which the Lord only fully knows, to place myself thus publicly in an attitude of hostility—not to their *persons*, for those I love—but to their *errors*, for those I deprecate. Against *those*, then, I now proceed to record my solemn protest, and in the ears of the Lord's people to utter my faithful warning.

The first serious charge which I have to alledge against the "Brethren" is, *that of creating schism in the Church of God*. To this sin the Word of God makes particular reference. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause *divisions* and offences, * * and avoid them." "That there should be no *schism* in the body." It is the will of God, and it was the prayer of Christ, that his Church should stand forth in her visible unity, thus presenting an evidence to the world—and the last which it would receive—of the truth of his mission, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." This visible unity the "Brethren" are fairly chargeable with violating.

They stand before the Church, convicted of causing 'divisions,' and of creating a "schism" in the body of Christ. And what more painful evil than this can befall the Church of God? Tribulation, and persecution, and trial from without, are as nothing in comparison. Infidelity may assail, error may oppose, and the flames of persecution may kindle around her, yet secure to her peace, and unity *within herself*, let her move on a united, undivided, unbroken Church, then, though an host should encamp against her, her heart need not fear, for she should appear before her enemies, "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." How fearful, then, is the sin of schism, of which the "Brethren" stand deeply convicted! They have separated themselves from the visible Church of God. They have dismembered themselves from the one body. They have added another to the already almost innumerable sects; and are thus weakening the hands, and inflicting a deep wound in the hearts of the Lord's people.

And here let us not be ignorant of Satan's device, for that he has thus come among the sons of God, who can doubt? The ostensible plea, under cover of which the "Brethren" have thus withdrawn themselves from the visible Church of God, is that of

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promoting a greater union among the saints! Was there ever a more deeply laid scheme of Satan to destroy the visible unity of the Church than this? And was ever any design of this arch enemy of the believer more palpable and apparent? Who cannot detect the cloven foot? Is *separation* from the saints of God, the way to promote *unity* among the saints? Do we *strengthen* the body by *dis-membering* it? Are we advancing its *oneness* by creating in it a *schism*? Yet this is what the "Brethren" have done and are doing. "I speak as to wise men! judge ye what I say."

And what is the real effect of this separation of the "Brethren," upon their own feelings and conduct towards other believers? Just what might have been expected—the most painful to the Church, the most grievous to the Spirit, the most dishonouring to God. It has led to their entire separation from all other saints in spirit, in communion, in worship, and even in social and domestic intercourse. It has broken up churches, once peaceful and prosperous. It has carried discord and disunion into families, once happy and united. It has warped the feelings, narrowed the mind, alienated the affections, and, where it has secured a footing, has created suspicion, coldness, and distrust.

These are serious consequences, we admit, to attribute to any system. But facts forbid us to come to any other conclusion; and the circumstances of the case forbid our speaking in terms less strongly.

Again—the *proselyting spirit* of these dear saints of God is such as greatly to weaken my confidence in the scripturalness of many of their views. Their great endeavour seems to be to swell their own by diminishing the number of other sections of the Christian Church. With them the *conversion of sinners*, if not entirely lost sight of, is yet but a minor and subordinate end of their “gatherings.” Yea, from their principal services the *unconverted* are wholly excluded. They neither permit them to observe their ordinances, or to listen to their exhortations, thus concealing their light and annihilating their character as a part of Christ’s *witnessing* Church. But to allure to their communion the unstable and the dissatisfied of other religious bodies; or to make a proselyte of one, distinguished for cultivated mind, valuable gifts, and elevated spirituality, they are ardent in their pursuit and untiring in their zeal. One convert to their peculiar opinions from a church, would appear to be to them of greater moment, and a more valuable acquisition, than ten converts to the faith of Christ

from the world. But is this a lovely, Christ-like spirit? Is not the spirit of *proselytism* from other sections of the Church, unworthy a body professing to be followers of the Lord Jesus? Does it not look more like an endeavour to build up a *sect*, than to enlarge the Church of God? to increase and strengthen a *party* rather than to promote the spread of the truth and the growth of Christ's kingdom? Verily it does.

And when accessions are thus made to their numbers, into what a state of *imprisonment, bondage, and espionage* are the dear saints immediately subjected. Their liberty is gone! The power, or at least the privilege, of thinking and acting for themselves is taken from them. Rank, property, talent, influence—those gifts of God's providence, bestowed and designed to be employed for His glory—must either be relinquished altogether, or be so curtailed, restricted, and obscured, as greatly to impair their power of accomplishing any thing extensively good. With *other Christians* there must be no association whatever, no worship, scarcely any friendly communication; all intercourse and communion with them being almost entirely suspended. Or, if occasionally indulged in, it is under such feelings of suspicion and restraint, and frequently with

a spirit so dogmatical, as greatly to mar the sweetness and lessen the profit of the interview. That there are not a few delightful and honourable examples to the contrary of this, I most frankly and gratefully acknowledge. They are the exceptions, however, and not the rule.

But I have more serious charges than these to allede against the "Brethren." *Their setting aside entirely the office of the ministry and of pastoral oversight*, at once identifies them with great and alarming errors. In the preceding pages the scripture argument for the Christian ministry has been briefly touched upon.* It is only necessary that I here lift my voice of solemn warning against those views, the tendency of which is to sap the foundation of God's own ordinances and appointments, and thus to open the flood-gate for the entrance of the most alarming evils in the Church of Christ. Lax views of the ministry lead to lax views of truth. It is impossible to lay a rude hand upon the *instrument* of conveying saving and sanctifying truth to the soul, without, in process of time, finding it as easy to lay that same destroying hand

* For a more full discussion of this subject, the reader is referred to a recent publication, entitled, "The Glory of the Redeemer in his Person and Work."

upon the *truth itself*. A lessening veneration for the office, inevitably leads to a lessening attachment to its design. Now I hold this denying of Christ's own institution, this trampling upon an office so manifestly of his own especial appointment, to be not only highly sinful in itself, as impeaching his wisdom and detracting from his glory, but also as greatly retarding the progress of divine truth, and introducing innumerable serious evils into the Church of God. And had I no other charge to bring against the "Brethren," than this one—of setting aside the office of the Christian ministry and of pastoral oversight—I would, with all affection, but with all earnestness, warn the saints of God through the length and breadth of the land, aye, and throughout the world, against the adoption of their views or association with their practices.

In thus laying the axe at the root of an office so wisely and so obviously instituted by the Great Head of the Church himself, the "Brethren" are betrayed into a practice as contrary to apostolic order as it is dishonouring to Christ and injurious to themselves. I allude to the custom of *self-appointment* to the office of leaders, elders, or instructors of the body, thus judging of their own gifts and qualifications to teach, edify, and build up the

saints, and call in God's hidden people. Where, in the New Testament, do we find precept or example for such lax order in the Church of God as this? Whoever elected himself to office? whoever claimed the right of judging of his own fitness to minister in holy things? The appointment to the office of *deacon* for the purpose of the 'daily ministration,' was it not (under the dictation of the Spirit,) by the election of the people, and the laying on of the hands of the apostles? And, in reference to the *ministry* of the word, did not the apostle "ordain them elders in every Church?" And was it not his charge to Titus, "For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and *ordain elders* in every city, as I had appointed thee?"

But how widely different is the practice of the *leaders* of the "Brethren" from this! They elect, they appoint, they judge, they rule themselves! An irresponsible body, they are amenable to none but themselves. They may assume the prerogative, and occasionally they have exercised it, of silencing others; but they claim and exercise the liberty of determining their own qualifications for the office and work of instructing and ruling the saints! This conducts us to another point.

The disavowal of all Church constitution, and consequently of all ecclesiastical order and discipline, is not among the least of the serious objections which every scripturally-informed mind must entertain against the views and practices of the "Brethren." Their usual argument—if argument it may be called—that sectional, independent, and local churches presided over by one man whom God has called to His ministry, and whom the people have chosen as their pastor, "is opposed to the manifested oneness of the people of God," has not the least foundation in reason or in truth. That the Church of God is *one*, spiritually, mystically **ONE**, His Word distinctly declares. "My dove, my undefiled is but one."¹ "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus."² "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body."³ "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus."⁴ Nothing can be clearer. But in what does this oneness essentially consist? In a visible union? In a unity of creed? In a unity of name? In a unity of Church government? In a mere semblance of unity? Far, far from it! The essential oneness of the Church of God consists in the "*unity of the Spirit*,"—the

¹ Song of Solomon vi. 9.

² Galatians III. 28.

³ 1 Corinthians XII. 13.

⁴ Galatians III. 26.

same Holy Spirit regenerating, sanctifying, teaching, and dwelling in all the sons of God alike. Is not this real unity? One Divine Spirit renewing and inhabiting all the members of the one body? Where is there such essential unity as this? O, it is a mighty and a magnificent truth! My heart kindles into love, my spirit expands with its vastness as I touch it. All believers in Jesus are essentially *one*. They are one in the same Divine Spirit, they are one in Christ Jesus, they are one in the heart of God, and they shall be one, really, indissolubly one, throughout eternity.

But how is this oneness of the children of God *manifested*? By multiplying the number of religious sects? By creating schisms in the body? By separating themselves one from another in worship, in communion, in social intercourse, in mutual edification, in benevolent action? By incorrect interpretations of God's Word? By the relinquishment of important truth? By lowering Christ's ordinances? and by trampling upon his institutions? and by denying his kingship? Is *this* a true, scriptural, Christ-honouring, infidel-convincing manifestation of the Church's oneness? Far, far from it! And yet this, I am compelled to say—and I say it not in the spirit of harshness, or with a view of pre-

senting an unfair statement of their views—this is the visible unity which the ‘gatherings’ of the “Brethren” present, and into sympathy with which they would fain proselyte the universal Church!

But the true manifested oneness of the saints is to be found in a unity of mind in all the great fundamental truths of the Bible—a unity of purpose and of action in promulgating those truths—a unity of spirit exhibited in a holy walk, in a tender affection, and a mutual forbearance towards each other, and in a recognition of Christian brotherhood, apart from all subscription to theological creeds or forms of Church government. In a unity of mind in points where all agree, in a unity of heart in points where all differ. The ‘gatherings’ of the “Brethren” present no such spectacle of unity as this. Theirs is a loose, shadowy, shewy form of union, based on no certain principles, held together by no permanent bonds—made at the sacrifice of truth, and destined to fall asunder, scattering, we fear, more thickly and broadly than ever, the elements of disunion and disorder through the Church and the world.

But we maintain that a distinct Gospel Church, formed on the apostolic plan, for the purposes of mutual edification, the worship of God, the observ-

ance of Christ's institutions, with "one mind and one heart striving together for the faith of the Gospel"—"walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blamelessly"—watching over, exhorting, admonishing, and assisting each other, presents a true and beautiful illustration of that unity of the saints which has for its basis the truth, for its nature the Spirit, and for its end the glory of God.

We go a step further. Where is there such an evidence of the real oneness of the Church as is presented in the spectacle of a large congregation of the saints of God of every name and denomination, assembled together on the broad platform of their oneness in Christ, for the hallowed purpose of Christian fellowship and communion? What has thus drawn them together? There I see the conformist and the non-conformist, the 'dipped and the sprinkled,' the disciples of Arminius and of Calvin. What, I ask, has thus attracted, and what thus cements these brethren together? I answer unhesitatingly, "The unity of the Spirit"—the love of Jesus—the blood of the Lamb—the irresistible power of a heaven-born affection, which no minor shade of opinion, and which no external rite can weaken or destroy. Beautiful and holy unity!

“ Not by a party’s narrow bank confined,
Not by a sameness of opinion joined ;
But cemented by the Redeemer’s blood,
And bound together in the heart of God.”

But here I am compelled to rest. I have not gone at any length into a consideration of the *doctrinal errors* of the “Brethren,” having already extended these pages beyond their prescribed limits. Possessing no fixed and acknowledged formula of belief, it is almost impossible to arrive at a correct idea of what they hold as a body. But from conversations with those who have left their communion, as well as from an examination of some of the accredited writings of their leaders (in some of which I may say with all kindness, I should rejoice to see amongst much that is really excellent and valuable, less that was contradictory in statement, severe in spirit, and obscure in style) it would seem that sentiments are entertained by many which restrict the operation of the Holy Spirit solely to the written word—which go far in a denial of the kingship of Christ—which entrench upon the fearful ground of Antinomianism—which tend to lax views of the obligation of the Sabbath—which claim as still existing in the Church the exercise of the miraculous gifts of healing, &c. thus opening the door to the greatest extravagance, fanaticism, and delu-

sion. It is with thankfulness to God I candidly acknowledge that I have as yet discovered no *essential* flaw in their doctrinal tenets—nothing that weakens the foundation of a sinner's hope. Yet the errors which I have enumerated are of so deeply serious a nature and tendency as constrains me solemnly and earnestly to warn the church of Christ against them.

Nor have I made any allusion to the withdrawal of the "Brethren" from the various Christian and benevolent operations of the Church; considering, as the great body of them do, that Bible, missionary, tract, Sabbath-school, and educational efforts are anti-scriptural! Surely that religious system which frowns upon these noble efforts cannot claim as its sole basis, the Word of God!

To the dear saints against some of whose views and practices I have thus endeavoured to guard the Church of Christ, it is not too much to say that a trembling hand and a moistened eye have traced these lines. So fearful have I been even of the *appearance* of unkind hostility to any of the Lord's beloved ones—any that were dear to the heart of Christ, yea, a part of Christ himself, and therefore ought to be dear to my heart,—that more than once have I paused to debate with myself the question of this open and decided opposition even to

what appeared to my own mind contrary to the Lord's Word, and injurious to His Church. Nothing, save a deep and solemn sense of my duty to God and to His people, has constrained me to this otherwise painful task. If my earnest contention for the truth has betrayed me into any undue warmth of spirit, or the use of any expression that sounds harsh or unkind, acquit me, I beseech you, of a serious design to wound feelings I would ever respect and cherish; and give me the credit of feeling not the slightest abatement of Christian love to your persons as members of the Lord's body, though thus compelled to withstand the errors which I believe you to hold.

Permit me, with all solemn earnestness, to urge you to review the position which you have taken in the Church of Christ and before the world. Ponder well, and as in the sight of God and of eternity, the fact of your open and avowed SEVERANCE from the great body of his saints—YOUR SEPARATION from his ministers and his people. If you find it more profitable to observe your own peculiar forms of worship, be it so. But, O, I implore you, by all that is tender and precious in the bond that binds you to the one family—by our unity in the one Spirit—by our oneness with the one Head—by

all that is lovely and sanctifying in the 'one Catholic church, and in the communion of saints'—by the prospect of eternal companionship in heaven, stand not aloof from your brethren of other Christian communions. Refuse not to occupy their pulpits—to worship in their sanctuaries—to bend the knee with them before their family altars—to extend to them the kindness and courtesies of Christian affection—to labour with them for the increase of our Lord's kingdom, and with them "earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints."

These are not days in which the friends of Jesus can afford to stand in cold distance from each other. Our common Christianity is assailed from every quarter. That which is most dear alike to us all is fearfully jeopardized. It behoves us, then, to be of "*one heart and of one mind, striving together* for the faith of the Gospel."

I have yet another note of alarm to sound in the camp of God's Israel, in reference to a form of error of recent yet of rapid growth amongst us, which has already enlisted in its behalf the sympathies of many, and which, if not arrested in its progress, threatens to eat out the core of Protestantism, and sap the very foundation of evangelical truth. The reader will have anticipated me when

I specify what is popularly termed TRACTARIANISM as the form of error alluded to. This system of semi-Popery, as it may with more propriety be denominated, is sufficiently potent and aggressive to awaken the most alarming apprehension, and to demand of every faithful watchman of the Church a firm and determined resistance.

That numbers subscribing *ex animo* to formulae in which they never heartily believed, and occupying ecclesiastical positions to which they were never divinely called—strangers to regenerating grace and, consequently, possessing no fixed evangelical principles, should have embraced with readiness and have set themselves to propagate with zeal, the heretical doctrines of Tractarianism—the developments of a *concealed Jesuitism*—is no marvel. The mind not preoccupied by truth, and the heart unsanctified by the Spirit, were prepared to yield to the influence and the dominion of a dogmata so much in unison with the blinded state of the one, and so flattering to the natural pride of the other. For what is 'Tractarianism,' but the product of an apostate nature prepared to engraft itself upon every degenerate branch ?

But that any individuals in the Church of God, professing to have "learned the way of the Lord

more perfectly," holding, maintaining, and preaching the grand, essential doctrines of our common Christianity, should have become in any degree inoculated with the spirit of this heresy, and should in any form have received, abetted, and advocated its principles, is of itself sufficient to awaken in the breast of every friend of truth, most painful interest, and to arouse the warning voice of every Gospel trumpet in the land.

But what are the distinctive characteristics of this system, against the slightest sympathy with which it behoves us thus solemnly to warn you? Lest I should be suspected of misstatement, I quote the words of an excellent Bishop, of the Episcopal denomination in America, who has already seen sufficient of the working of these deleterious principles in his own land, to call forth his most strenuous and manly opposition. He enumerates, among its principal features, the following:—"Exaggerated views of the efficacy of the Sacraments; unscriptural statements respecting the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper; and the description of this festival as a sacrifice, instead of a commemoration of that sacrifice which was offered once for all; the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution, as a power delegated to the ministry; the joining together of scrip-

ture and tradition, as co-ordinate authorities in matters of faith; a disposition to undervalue the privileges of the glorious Reformation, and to depreciate even those English reformers whose claims to our gratitude are written in their blood; the merging of the individuality of each man, as a subject of the Holy Spirit's influences, in the Church collectively; and the chiefest and most pernicious of all, confused views of the fundamental doctrine of justification—making it to depend, not wholly upon that extrinsic righteousness which flows to us from the merits of Christ without, but in part upon an inherent righteousness existing within.”* To these may be added, a superstitious reverence of prelatical authority, and exclusive views of the Christian ministry, as proceeding through apostolic descent, and clothed with extraordinary powers of grace.

Now it would not be difficult to shew, were it our design, that these principles are diametrically opposed to the Word of God, that they are fearfully pernicious in their tendency, and that where they exist they constitute the upas-tree of the church, beneath whose poisonous shade all truth withers, and all spirituality expires. Let us for a moment

* Bishop Eastburn.

trace some of their results. The tendency of 'Puseyism,' as it is termed, is to cast a shade of more than Egyptian darkness over all the grand and essential doctrines of the Gospel—reducing to a nullity all vital, experimental, and practical Christianity. It denies the doctrine of salvation by grace—of justification by faith—the all-sufficient atonement of Christ—the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit—the necessity of inward sanctification—and the sole authority and sufficiency of the Word of God. Tearing from the people and demolishing these Bible and Protestant doctrines, what does it substitute for and teach in their place? Seriously ponder! Salvation merited and procured by human works—conversion the mere assent of the mind to a creed—regeneration by water baptism—the pardon of sin by ministerial absolution—personal union with Christ by a partaking of the 'sacrament'—membership with the mystical Church of God by an external profession—the Divine Scriptures of truth sufficient and safe only as they are allied to unwritten human tradition! Surely no comment is needed to shew that they who preach these doctrines, "bring in damnable heresies."

And what is the effect of these poisonous, soul-

destroying views upon that portion of the population unhappily brought under their influence? Awfully and fatally destructive! The moral darkness of the mind is deepened—the false security of the soul is undisturbed—the natural smitings of the conscience are quieted—the carnal pride of the heart is flattered—the desperate depravity of fallen nature is concealed—and the deathly slumber of the soul is unbroken until surprised by the tremendous scenes of eternity. Then awakening in another world the ruined man discovers his error when too late to retrace his way. *These* are the principles inculcated in the Oxford school. This is the teaching of the Oxford divines. And these the fatal consequences of the Oxford heresy!

Oh, it is an awful and a fearful thing to pervert the Gospel of Christ! A single error may prove fatal to thousands of souls. The earthquake of Lisbon; the eruption of Vesuvius, throwing up its balls of fire, while rivers of liquid laver roll down its sides, 'whelming cities and vineyards in irrecoverable darkness and desolation, were as nothing compared with the tremendous and fatal consequences which *his* labours produce, who, from the pulpit or the press, pours out his perversion of truth over the deathless mind entrusted to his care,

and led captive at his will. What can compare with the value of immortal souls? And who can conceive of the doom of him who destroys them?

But to define to the saints of God more especially exposed to the influence of these views, *their imperious duty in reference to them*, and not to attempt their lengthened refutation, is our principal aim in this small work. The line of Christian duty, then, is obvious and plain. It is to have no fellowship, in any shape or form, with these doctrines and works of darkness. He that biddeth their propagators 'God speed,' is a partaker of their sin. It is solemn to think and awful to affirm, but too true to conceal, that the Divine anathema—for the Spirit spake by Paul—is pronounced upon all who preach false doctrine, and who, by so doing, would supplant the one true by the preaching of another and a spurious Gospel. I have already quoted, but venture in this connexion to quote again, his burning words: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him

be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." What an awful denunciation! what a fearful anathema, calmly, firmly uttered, boldly, dispassionately reiterated! No heresiarch escapes it. Be he an apostle divinely accredited, and possessing miraculous gifts; yet, coming with another and a false system than that true one which God had revealed, the thunder bolt, thus winged by divine inspiration, smites him to the earth. Or be he the apocalyptic angel, 'flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth,' yet departing from the faith, proving recreant to his high commission, and preaching 'another gospel,' here is that tremendous curse which scathes his wings, and hurls him from his lofty soarings to the depths of deepest woe.

And is it so, my Christian reader, that an apostle, or an angel issuing from the abodes of glory, bright from the presence of God, *may* preach another gospel, and call down upon him the darkening curse of Jehovah? Then who is safe, of mortal, sinful, erring man? Disguised as an angel of light, and moving on noiseless wing, the demon of error may glide through our midst with lofty pretensions of

apostolic credential, and superior sanctity, and 'sacramental grace,' and awful mystery, and disinterested benevolence, prosecuting his dark designs, disseminating his poisonous views, leading captive immortal souls, and deceiving, 'if it were possible, the very elect.' How important, then, that we be not 'ignorant of Satan's devices.' That we come not near the man who preaches perverted truth, another gospel than that which is *from* Jesus, which speaks *of* Jesus, which leads *to* Jesus, dazzling though his vestments are, and insinuating as his preaching and his forms may be, lest we share in the curse suspended over his head, and which, sooner or later, must fall with overwhelming fury, the grace of God preventing it not.

Separate yourselves, then, I beseech you, from all communion with a system so opposed to the Gospel of Christ, so derogatory to the glory of God, and so destructive of immortal souls as this. 'Touch not, taste not, handle not' its doctrines or its practices. Puseyism is not a mere approach to Popery, it is Popery itself. The Puseyite is but a Papist by another name. He is a disguised devotee of the Romish Church. The doctrines which he holds, and the practices which he observes, are essentially Papal. All sympathy, then, with the principles

and ceremonies of Tractarianism, is sympathy with the apostate and idolatrous Church of Rome. And what is the solemn warning which God has given to his saints, in reference to that Church? "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."¹ Avoid all semblance even of affinity with this corrupt and dangerous system. Be careful of placing the Church of Christ above Christ himself, or the writings of man above the Word of God, or the minister above the Holy Ghost. Suppress an *exclusive, unchurching, and unchristianizing* spirit in yourself; gently rebuke and firmly resist it in others. Let not your port and bearing towards the members of other Christian communions, seem to say—"Stand by, for I am holier than thou. The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are *we*." But rather be prompt to recognize the 'one Spirit,' the 'one Lord,' and the 'one faith,' in *all* the children of the one family; and think not that in so doing you are exercising a marvellous display of charity and condescension; but that rather you are deepening the debt of obligation you owe to the sovereign love of God in being permitted to assimilate in any degree with His own Spirit in the hearts of His regenerate ones.

¹ Revelations XVIII. 4.

Be very cautious of dictating the instrumentality by which the Gospel message shall come to you. Let God, and not the prophet, smite the rock and cleave the channel from whence and through which the living, healing waters shall flow. Be it to you of little moment by whom the Will and Testament of your Lord is explained and expounded, if but your name is found appended to the rich legacies of his grace and love. Set an increasing value upon a preached Gospel. That Gospel growing daily more scarce, is growing daily more precious. A spiritual, faithful minister of Christ's Gospel will soon become infinitely more valuable than the gold of Ophir. Soon will be fulfilled that affecting prophecy, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east: they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it."¹ Days of darkness, times of trial, are rapidly advancing upon the Church. Has not this spiritual drought, this famine of the Word of the Lord already begun? How few there are who preach an un mutilated

¹ Amos VIII. 11, 12:

Gospel, a whole Saviour, a full Christ, the simple, unadulterated, undiluted truth. How few preach in the power and demonstration of the Spirit, every sermon, under his rich and fragrant anointing, proving either instrumental of the conversion of souls, or the upbuilding of the saints in Christ. Are not the diluted form in which the Gospel is exhibited by the many, and the comparatively small success which attends the preaching of the few, prominent, significant, and alarming 'signs of the times?' If, then, my reader, you are favoured with the preaching of a pure, unmixed, and powerful Gospel—a ministry full of Jesus, and rich with divine unction, coming to your soul, "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," prize, O prize it above your choicest, richest, greatest blessings. Contribute of your prayers and your labour to uphold, strengthen, and widen its influence. And whatever the Lord's dealings with you in providence may be—whatever trials he sends, or mercies he withholds, love him, thank him, serve him for a preached Gospel.

Avoid the beginnings of error, and a wilful exposure to its influence. The process by which men depart from the truth is seldom sudden, bold, and determined in its commencement, or very rapid

and perceptible in its early progress and its final results. But, nevertheless, error proceeds upon an inclined plane; and although its first movements may be slow and cautious, yet the mind, having once attached itself to the descending body, increases in velocity as it descends, and who can tell where a single error will land its victim? One step taken in any downward course is but preparatory to a second, and a second paves the easy way for a third, and a third is soon followed by a succession. Long may the mind have been preparing for this first step. Great was the struggle ere truth, long venerated, cherished, and loved, was relinquished for the soulless, lifeless form of error. But, however difficult was the loosening of the first stone in the temple of truth, yet that stone once displaced, rendered the removal of another less difficult, until, by a gradual but certain and fearful process, the whole Christian system lay in ruins at the feet. How would the mind of Edward Irving—a child of God in the midst of his waywardness, and doubtless now reposing in heaven on the bosom he so deeply wounded on earth—how would he have shuddered, in the commencement of his erratic course, at the bare thought of the lengths to which his first step in false doctrine would eventually con-

duct him ! He never intended, when he upheaved his anchor, and loosed his moorings from the strong ground of God's word, to have steered his noble vessel amid the shoals and the rocks of fanaticism and error, where, alas ! it struck and foundered ! So, too, was it with Priestly. He tells us, in detailing his melancholy progress, that at first he was "a Calvinist, and that of the strictest sect." That then he "became an Arian, next a low Arian, and then a Socinian of the lowest kind." And after all, he adds, that he "does not know when his creed will be fixed !"* O, is not this sad picture sufficiently vivid in its dark colouring, to cause every humble-minded believer to shudder at the first step in error.

Beware, then, of erroneous doctrine and of false teaching. There is frequently a novelty and a fascination in error, peculiarly seductive. It is subtle, and insinuating. Sometimes it assumes the garb of great simplicity ; at others, it is clad in more gorgeous and imposing forms. It is protean and wily. It can assume any shape, and accommodate itself to any circumstance. So mixed, too, is it often with some portion of truth, that the unstable and the unsuspecting are beguiled within its

* See "Magee on the Atonement." I. p. 174.

meshes ere they are aware of having in the slightest degree yielded their judgment or feelings to its influence. Place not yourself, then, in the way of its temptation. Be not constrained by idle curiosity, or by the persuasion of others, or with a desire—more honest than wise—to acquaint yourself with its peculiar modes of attack, its reasonings and its arguments, in order to fortify yourself more thoroughly against its advances, to listen to its teaching, or read the enticing works it is perpetually issuing from the press. If you value peace of mind—a holy walk—the glory of God—the honour of Jesus, tamper not, I do beseech you, with false doctrine. No man is so completely mailed in the armour of truth as to be able to say, “I am safe!” “Be not high minded, but fear!”

Cultivate an unfeigned and fervent love for all who preach the truth in its purity, and who live it in its holiness. This will greatly assist in strengthening a love and veneration for the truth itself. An *exclusive* spirit has a powerful tendency to magnify and exalt the importance of a sect or party, above the truth, and so to weaken the soul's attachment to it. Christianity then begins to be loved and propagated, not for its own sake, but for the sake of those whose views on some minor and peculiar

points are in unison with our own. This state of mind is fearfully deceptive and dangerous. We may be ensnared into the belief that our love, and zeal, and fervour are inspired by the intrinsic character and worth of the truth; whereas, were we narrowly to dissect our deceitful hearts, we should perhaps find that our love, and zeal, and fervour were so much thick incense enveloping the denomination or sect to which we belonged. The Episcopalian's zeal may be for his episcopacy; the Presbyterian's, for his presbyterianism; the Independent's, for his congregationalism; the Wesleyan's, for his methodism; the Plymouth Brother's, for his separation; and the Baptist's, for his baptism; and so it shall be a love for a *party*, and not for the essential, pure, and glorious *truth* which alone can sanctify and save the soul. But, beloved, this is not the high standard towards which we ought to aim. The great and chief point to which we bend our efforts should not be strictly and exclusively denominational,—though we are by no means called upon to undervalue, or desist from seeking, in a scriptural way, the propagation of what we believe to be the truth of God,—but the conversion of souls, the upbuilding of the Christian Church, the increase of Immanuel's kingdom, the calling in

of a hidden people, should be the great objects towards which our exertions should tend. Then would we embrace in the arms of Christian affection, and breathe our blessing over *all* who were so labouring in Christ's vineyard.

Cherish a kind, tender, and prayerful feeling towards those who have departed from the truth, and are now the subjects and the advocates of error. "Count them not as enemies, but admonish them as brethren." Seek to recover and reclaim them in the spirit of meekness and affection. Be not censorious and harsh. Take not the judgment seat. Repel them not from, but rather draw them to, you. Make every allowance which charity would suggest, and which truth would permit. O, consider your own infirmities, wanderings, and liability to err; remember that you stand by grace, and that the Lord alone has kept, and still keeps you. Imitate his sweet example, and go after the stray sheep; search him out, bring him back with all gentleness to the fold, rejoicing more over that fallen but restored brother, than over those who had not fallen, and needed no restoration.

Consider *the removal of the Gospel* as the direst calamity that can befall a nation, a church, or an

individual. When God withdraws His Ministers or His Word, He withdraws Himself. The removal of the candlestick out of its place is the extinguishment of all spiritual light—the departure, and that for ever, of the glory, the ornament, and the safety of a people. How fertile and instructive is inspired history on this point. What is that of the seven Churches of Asia, but a solemn confirmation of this truth? Where are those Churches, once so flourishing and distinguished, who could claim such pastors as Polycarp and Athanasius, Chrysostom and Arenæus, Antipos and Nazianzen? Alas! they left their first love, they grew lukewarm and unwatchful; they departed from the purity of the faith, and the Lord came as a thief in the night, and removed the candlestick, quenched the light of those churches, and abandoned the nation to Mahomedan imposture and Turkish superstition, wrapping all Asia in the mantle of thick darkness. O, its a fearful matter when the Gospel departs from a nation, and the people take up the sore lamentation, “We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet among us;”¹ and God, as it were, shakes off the dust of His feet, and retires because that His Word has been first undervalued, then perverted, and at last totally rejected.

¹ Psalm LXXIV. 9.

The removal of the Gospel from the midst of a people is also the sure presage of impending and fast-approaching judgments. It is not only itself a judgment, but it is the precursor of the most overwhelming temporal and spiritual calamities. How often history attests the fact that scarcely have the messengers of peace passed away, but those of woe have followed. Righteous Lot's departure from ungodly Sodom was immediately succeeded by the fearful judgments of God upon its doomed inhabitants. The going up of the glory of the Lord from the cherubim, was the signal for the destroyer to pass through the city, smiting utterly old and young.¹ When Jerusalem knew not the time of her Gospel visitation, killing her prophets, and stoning the messengers of peace that were sent unto her, the Roman eagles surrounded her ramparts, destroyed her temple, ploughed up her foundations, leaving not one stone upon another. Thus might we multiply instances corroborative of the truth, that, when the sword of mercy is sheathed amongst a people, the sword of justice is drawn. That when the angel of blessing and of life departs, the angel of destruction and of death follows. Not more certainly or more quickly does the thunder bolt follow

¹ Ezekiel ix. 3—6.

the lightning's gleam, than does the vengeance of God often succeed the quenching of the light of the glorious Gospel in a land.

And are there no present grounds to fear the removal of the Gospel from our country? Are there already no signs of its partial withdrawal—the waning of its glory, and the weakening of its power? Alas! they are many and alarming. The inroad of the greatest corruptions in doctrine that have ever assailed the Church of God—the defection of so many from the purity of the truth and the simplicity of Christ—the increase of divisions among the saints—the comparatively small results that attend the ministry of the word—the great lack of unction and power with which that word is preached—the low standard of zeal and self-denying exertion for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad—the infidel indifference with which men of political power regard the obstructions that are made to the progress of truth—the strong possession which a religion of mere form and sentiment has taken of the public mind, these are strong indications of a slow but certain waning of Gospel light and influence from our midst.

In view of these things, what becomes the solemn and imperious duty of the professing Church

of God? To awake out of sleep, and gird itself for the coming conflict. A war is approaching—not of brute force, and of carnal weapons, but of principle, of mind. Not a physical, but a moral conflict. A conflict between Christ and Antichrist; between Protestantism and Romanism; between the true Gospel and the false. It will be war of opinion—mind combating with mind—principle with principle—religion with religion. Austria and Rome are already secretly and silently, but zealously and effectually, at work, gathering, marshaling, and consolidating their forces. The battle of Gog and Magog is advancing. All Europe appears to be preparing for the fearful convulsion, and for the final conflict. It behoves, then, the Church of God to be broadly awake to its right position; to ‘know the times,’ and be prepared to meet its necessities. These are not days for inglorious ease, indolence, and repose. These are not times for a pusillanimous defence of the truth, or for a base truckling to error, or for a treacherous compromise with the foe. Intelligence and decision—firmness and faith—prayer and watchfulness—devotedness and zeal must be the attributes of *his* Christianity who hopes to be prepared for the struggle, when it comes. To this conflict the Lord

of hosts is summoning his people. He is calling them to deeper personal holiness—to greater establishment in the truth—to a closer unity of the Spirit, and more love one towards another—to a higher consecration of wealth, rank, talent, influence, and time to His service. The trumpet is now blowing an alarm! It demands of *every* soldier of Christ that he “prepare himself to the battle.” That taking to himself the “whole armour of God, having his loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; taking the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God,” he may be “able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”—And let all who refuse to listen to the alarm, and obey not the summons, tremble lest that woe come upon him which fell upon an ancient people, “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” In this conflict with error and with sin, the feeblest believer may share a part. However small his gifts, or humble his sphere, yet, with a burning heart of love to Jesus, he may wing a pebble from his sling which shall lay some boast-

ing Goliath in the dust. Is he a *Sabbath-school teacher*, or the *conductor of a Bible class*? he occupies a most effective position in the Church, second only in importance, power, and usefulness to the pulpit itself. Is he a *missionary* or a *Bible collector*, a *tract distributor*, or a *visitor of sick and of dying beds*? what an important post does he fill! what a sphere for glorifying God, for testifying of Jesus, and for pressing the claims of eternity! Oh, let no professor—be he young or old, of lowly or of high talents—fold his arms in indolent repose, or deem himself unfit to come to the ‘help of the Lord against the mighty.’

In the tribulations now evidently and rapidly approaching, it may be that the “time is come that judgment must *begin at the house of God.*” If so, let us not misunderstand its character. It will not be the process of a stern and angry Judge, but the wise and merciful dealing of a reconciled God and Saviour. “*Then He shall sit as 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. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, as in former years.*” O blessed result of all our Fa-

ther's judgments upon the Church ! Not in wrath, but in love, not with a view to destroy, but to save, will those judgments come. Not one frown of anger, nor one drop of wrath, nor one gleam of vengeance will mark them. He will but purify the mass ; He will but consume the refuse ; He will but separate the precious from the vile, and more deeply and more vividly enstamp the image of his own holiness on the heart. Tried believer ! the dealings of a covenant God with you are not judicial, but parental. They flow from a *Father's* loving heart. That cloud, threatening though it appears, wraps yet in its dark folds no curse ; but it embosoms a *Parent's blessing*. It comes freighted with a mercy from on high. It comes conveying the tidings of love and peace. And when it speaks it will be but the echo of a Father's heart, unfolding to you its hidden and deathless love. Thus, not upon an elect Church will these fast-coming judgments fall as upon an ungodly world. The wicked he will consume as *chaff*, and destroy as *dross* ; but he will sift his own people as *wheat*, and "purge them as *gold* and *silver*." Not one shock of the precious corn, nor one grain of the priceless ore will be lost. The Church of the Triune God is **SAFE**. She may be

rocked in the sea, and tossed by the tempest, yet is she eternally secure, for Jesus is in her, because she is in Jesus. He is guiding, shielding, and upholding her, and will, through all her fiery trials, place her safe on the sunny heights of eternal glory.

This subject addresses itself pointedly and solemnly to every neglecter of the Gospel. Unconverted reader ! the silver trumpet of the Gospel has often sounded in your ears ; but hitherto you have neglected its glad announcements. You have not hearkened to the ‘voice of charmers, charming never so wisely.’ The minister has perhaps been to you as “a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;” with your mouth you shew him much love; you have approved, assented, and admired, but yet you are *unconverted* ! You have not repented of your sins, nor believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus far he has been to you but a “savour of death unto death.” And, O, remember that, “If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” Barren hearer of the word ! see your present character and future state,

thus described in God's word—"That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." Mark the fearful gradation—first, the unfruitfulness under the culture of the Gospel,—then the rejection—followed by the curse, and the final issue, the unquenchable flame! Careless, prayerless, Christless reader! *hell* will be your eternal doom, dying a barren hearer of the word, a wilful rejector of Christ's glorious Gospel. O to dwell in flames *for ever!* The wrath of God *for ever!* The gnawing worm *for ever!* Eternity, *Eternity*, ETERNITY! O how solemn, how appalling thou art to a Gospel-hardened, Christ-despising, God-hating soul! Sinner! when the silver tones of this Gospel trumpet, breathing out its closing invitation of mercy, shall have died away upon your ears, *another trumpet* will sound! "The *last* trumpet," "the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God." With what awful tones will the blast of *that* trumpet sound. What terror will it produce! what alarm will it awaken! what tidings of woe will it announce!

"Day of Judgment—day of wonders!

Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,

Louder than a thousand thunders,

Shakes the vast creation round!

How the summons
Will the sinner's heart confound !

“ See the Judge our nature wearing,
Clothed in majesty divine !
You, who long for His appearing,
Then shall say, ‘ This God is mine !’
Gracious Saviour !
Own me in that day for thine !

“ At His call the dead awaken,
Rise to life from earth and sea :
All the powers of nature shaken
By his looks prepare to flee :
Careless sinner !
What will then become of thee ?

“ Horrors, past imagination,
Will surprise your trembling heart,
When you hear your condemnation,
‘ Hence, accursed wretch, depart ?
Thou with Satan
And his angels have thy part !’

“ But to those who have confessed,
Loved, and served the Lord below,
He will say, ‘ Come near, ye blessed !
See the kingdom I bestow !
You for ever
Shall my love and glory know.’ ”

Repent, then, this moment, repent ! Fall low before the cross of Jesus, and there seek the Holy Spirit's renewing grace. In commencing this great work, not a moment have you to lose. Eternity is

near at hand. Behold, the Judge standeth at the door! That you are *out of hell* is alone because God, the God you have hated, is long-suffering. Presume upon His patience no longer. It has its limits, and soon may turn to vengeance. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Harken to the voice of the Gospel trumpet while yet once more it breathes forth its soul-animating, life-inspiring strains.— "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." "The Spirit and the bride say Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Heed the warning, welcome the invitation, or yours will be the lamentation of mourning and of woe,— "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!"

"Come who will!" the voice from heaven
 Like a silver trumpet calls:
 'Come who will!' the Church hath given
 Back the echo from her walls.

"Come! to rivers ever flowing
 From the high eternal throne:
 Come! where Christ his gifts bestowing
 In his church on earth is known.

“ Heavenly music ! each who listens
Longing for his spirit's home ;
While his look with rapture glistens,
Burns to say, ‘ I come ! I come ! ’ ”

“ BLESSED IS THE PEOPLE THAT KNOW THE
JOYFUL SOUND : THEY SHALL WALK, O LORD,
IN THE LIGHT OF THY COUNTENANCE. IN THY
NAME SHALL THEY REJOICE ALL THE DAY : AND
IN THY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL THEY BE EX-
ALTED.”

WORKS

BY THE

REV. OCTAVIUS WINSLOW.

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