

BV 4017

.L6

Copy 1



J. A. Wilson, Archt.

J. R. Telfer, Sc.

SEVENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTER
IN THE PULPIT;
AN
INAUGURAL DISCOURSE,

BY REV. WILLIS LORD, D. D.:
PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ENTERING UPON THE PASTORAL CHARGE
OF THE SEVENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CINCINNATI, DECEMBER 28, 1851.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CINCINNATI:
JOHN D. THORPE, NO. 74 WEST FOURTH STREET.
1852.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CINCINNATI, March, 1852.

REV. WILLIS LORD, D. D.,

DEAR SIR:—Having listened with deep interest to your INAUGURATION SERMON, delivered in the Seventh Presbyterian Church, Broadway, in December last, and desirous of preserving it for reference in a more permanent form, we respectfully request from you a copy for publication.

R. T. MCFARLAND,
HENRY THOMAS,
M. H. FOWLER,
H. MORRIS JOHNSTON,
J. H. COYLE,
E. B. GARDNER,
M. F. THOMPSON,

WM. F. IRWIN,
JOHN W. HERRON,
SAM. B. KEYS,
P. A. SPINNING,
L. A. OSTROM,
SAMUEL LOWRY, JR.,
JOHN GRUBB.

CINCINNATI, March 13th, 1852.

TO MESSRS. MCFARLAND, IRWIN, AND OTHERS:

GENTLEMEN:—Your appreciation of my Inaugural Discourse, is far higher than my own. I feel a real reluctance in giving it to you for publication. Desirous, however, of gratifying, in every proper way, the young men of the congregation, and, in the hope that the Discourse may be of some use to yourselves and others, I submit it to your disposal.

Very affectionately yours,

WILLIS LORD.

INAUGURAL DISCOURSE.

If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth; that in all things God may be glorified, through Jesus Christ; to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.—1 Peter, 4: 11.

If the importance and dignity of any office among men, are to be estimated by the divinity of its origin, the beneficence and grandeur of its design, and the vastness and glory of its results, those of the Christian Ministry must be confessed incomparable.

But we propose no eulogy. We are here now to speak of the duties of the office. In due time, God himself will reveal its honors.

The passage we have read has its primary application to all who have received the gifts of grace. Every christian is a steward, accountable to God for all his faculties and means, and for their use, according to the principle here set forth. This general application, however, involves another which is special. The law which binds all christians, rests with increased force on those among them who hold positions of peculiar influence and responsibility. There is an obvious propriety, therefore, in viewing the text as having an official aspect; as a copy of instructions, which, appended to and explanatory of his commission, God has given to

every Christian Minister, to determine invariably and forever the matter, manner, and end of his preaching, to-wit :

I. THE WORD OF GOD.

II. IN THE STRENGTH OF GOD.

III. FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

We thus indicate our subject for the present occasion, and bespeak for the views we may suggest, your intelligent consideration.

I. The Christian Minister is required, first of all, to preach the WORD OF GOD. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." By this term, "oracles," Stephen (Acts 7: 38) designates the law given at Sinai. Paul uses it (Rom. 3: 2) with reference to the entire Old Testament. Extending still more its meaning, Peter embraces in it here, the revelation made to the Evangelists and Apostles, as well as to Moses and the Prophets. It denotes, therefore, the complete Scriptures. In their variety and fulness, their facts and precepts, their doctrines and examples, without adulteration, reservation, or equivocation, and presented in due proportion and dependency, these are to constitute the essential matter of his preaching, who speaks to men in the name of Christ.

This general proposition few, of course, will in form deny. It were too plain an impeachment of Him who gave us the Bible, resplendent on every page with his own signature; and who gave it as the only perfect rule of faith and practice.

Is there, however, no denial of this, and departure from it, in fact? In these days of progress and bold adventure, are there none among the professed ministers of the

gospel, liable to the charge of violating this explicit law of heaven?

Arraign the *Moral Preacher*. It is, indeed, an abused word.

“Talk they of morals! O! thou bleeding Love—
The grand morality is love of thee!”

But waive this misuse of the word, and does not then the merely moral preacher stand fearfully delinquent? Sweetly, soothingly, winningly he may preach, but does he preach truly? What he calls morals, he may preach; the beautiful, the right, the good; but does he preach, like Paul, Jesus Christ and him crucified? Pointing to the cross, does he cry, with the earnestness of one who feels, that the death there is the life of men—

“There hangs all human hope! That nail supports
A falling universe! That gone—we die!”

Who does not know the reverse of this is true. With seemingly polite, but resolute endeavor, he aims to undermine the cross; to conceal its character and designs; to vacate the atoning efficacy of the blood of Christ, and tear the diadem from his head. He eulogizes innocent, god-like human nature; infirm it may be, and sometimes erring; but essentially pure and good, and, therefore, ever longing for and tending to its divine source. Natural sympathy, with him, is no small part of religion; and the tear it gracefully sheds over suffering, will help, at least, to wash away sin. And so he warbles, “peace, peace;” even though “there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!”

Arraign the *Philosophical Preacher*. More presumptuous than wise or devout, he determines alike the meaning and the truth of the oracles of God, by their coincidence with

the dicta of what he regards as the pure reason. Facts, with him, are not the basis of theory; but theory the test of facts. The subjective is everything; the objective, nothing.

Are there none of this class? What intelligent man does not know, that for long years an unbaptized philosophy has been covertly attempting to supplant the authority, and eviscerate the substance of revelation. In the schools and in the pulpit are men, who affect the distinction of rational divines, as though it were not the highest office and honor of reason to receive, as a child, the disclosures of the Infinite Mind. They would light their tapers in Plato, Kant, Coleridge, or Morell, rather than in Isaiah, John, or Paul. The Academy is to them more attractive and instructive than the Cross; Athens than Jerusalem; Olympus than Sinai and Calvary. By a marvellous perversion of the first principles of reason, they conclude, and some avow, that in our investigation of religious truth, we should pay a superior deference to the abstruse sentences of the metaphysician, than to the clear averments of the only wise God! The result is legitimate as it is mournful. In certain religious circles, metaphysical theories have become so incorporated with or substituted for scriptural truth; the fundamental facts and principles of the gospel so stripped of their sacred simplicity, or essentially adulterated or perverted, as often to defy the recognition of those who have studied them only in the writings of Prophets and Apostles. Certainly, then, whatever else may be his merit, the self-styled philosophical Preacher does not "speak as the oracles of God."

Arraign the *Practical Preacher*. We hope we shall not be misunderstood. We use this term, also, in its too

current meaning—a meaning most meagre and perverse. How often does it indicate the man, who, though seemingly laborious, is too indolent to think; whose preaching is little more than the iteration of a few, and those the simplest, elements of truth; who oftentimes is most impassioned in the sacred desk, most strenuously in earnest amidst complete vacuity of thought, toiling to build without materials, without a basis. Mental inaction soon induces mental feebleness. Natural vigor is rapidly enervated by indolence. As the effect of an inevitable law, such a man describes a constantly narrowing circle, of which a point becomes, at length, the center and circumference.

Or take the best examples of this class. Sermons on dietetics, furniture, dress; on alms-giving, responsibility, zeal; on even repentance, prayer, watchfulness, love, do not exhaust the gospel. The Christian Minister is indeed seriously at fault, who does not give them their true place and degree in his preaching; but then they mostly belong to the surface rather than the heart of the great evangelic system. Nor is true piety all an impulse, or a feeling. The oracles of God are filled with vast and glorious truths, on which they must build who build for heaven; truths various, enriching, transforming, ennobling, and, like masses of precious ore or flashing diamonds, not all nor chiefly scattered on the surface, but imbedded deep in exhaustless mines. Real piety, also, is an enduring principle, rather than a fluctuating emotion. It has a ground and root, and imperishable life, where no eye of man can pierce. Its most characteristic development we call faith. The faith of the christian is attracted by and reposes on the divine testimony. That testimony is to him knowledge, truth. And

this is the grand foundation and incentive of holy effort and love.

Arraign, finally, the *Doctrinal Preacher*. Doubtless he has our sympathy. If we must give our suffrage to any one of those thus glanced at, we must give it to him. He labors to understand and exhibit the oracles of God. He goes down into the mines, and brings from their concealed treasures, gems and massive ore. He presents truth to men, systematically, logically; oftentimes luminously. They cannot hear him uninstructed. Did the heart always follow the understanding, they could not hear him without salutary impression. He is, however, deficient. The practical preacher brings you a dim torch, but no fuel. The doctrinal preacher brings an abundance of fuel, but frequently no fire to kindle it. Or, as the anatomist of the dead body, he will show you the bones, joints, ligaments, muscles, tendons, nerves; he will point you even to the beauty which still lingers in the countenance—the beauty that lingers oft in death—and you shall admire the wonderful adaptation, dependence, symmetry and finish conspicuous through the whole. Yet, it is a corpse. No soul speaks in those glassy eyes. That cold heart does not throb. The vital current is congealed in the arteries and veins. The animating, sympathizing spirit is gone.

What then? Do we underrate morality and philosophy, practical appeal and doctrinal discussion? By no means. In the biblical conception of them—the only true one—these things have our profoundest regard. We have been using the terms in the current, not the legitimate sense. True practical preaching is the exposition and enforcement of the doctrines of the Bible. True doctrinal preaching is

necessarily practical. Under God's constitution for intelligent and moral beings, we may no more look for a vigorous and enduring holiness, apart from Scriptural knowledge, than for the light and heat of noonday without the sun. Or, to change the comparison, Scriptural knowledge is as requisite in order to holiness, as in architecture the foundation and frame are to the superstructure and covering. It is but a sickly piety, which rests on declamation, however fervid, and not rather on the precious, searching, vivifying truths of God's word, intelligently and prayerfully pondered. It resembles the fitful glare of a dying lamp, now for a moment gleaming with an unnatural brightness, and anon struggling for a mere gloomy existence, rather than the steadily increasing light and glory of the sun.

He, then, is the true preacher, who speaks as the oracles of God. If he preaches morality, it is that of the Bible, embodied in the code given from Sinai, and most solemnly re-enforced by the sacrifice on Calvary. If he preaches philosophy, it is that of the Bible, emanating from the Omniscient mind, and conveyed to us in the utterances of inspired men, and of Jesus Christ. When he exhibits the doctrines of religion, it is in order to those practical results which the Bible everywhere connects with an intelligent and cordial reception of the truth. When he enforces the duties of religion, it is on the basis of those fundamental facts and principles on which the Bible makes all duty rest. In his regard, the Bible is the only volume bearing the great seal of God, and containing his whole message to men. With him, therefore, the Bible is infallible and supreme.

And by this view of the Bible, and of his own office as

its expounder and enforcer, is he doomed to dull monotony? Must he traverse a narrow circle? Is there not scope here for all his powers, in their most vigorous and their widest excursions? Is this a shallow fountain? Are its streams mere rivulets, soon dry? Away with the falsehood. What a peerless volume is this! What visible and inseverable links bind it to the throne of God! What unsearchable treasures of wisdom and grace does it reveal to men! What sources of individual elevation! What foundations and means of social well-being! What elements and sanctions of civil and moral law! What pathos of appeal! What power of argument! What dignity of history! What perfection of eloquence! What strains of poetry! What glories of holiness! What manifestations of God! What disclosures concerning man! What depths of mercy! What acts and sacrifices of love! What records of creation and providence; of apostasy and redemption; of judgment and eternity! What gloom and wo of hell! What splendor and bliss of heaven! O, then, if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.

Perhaps, however, you are ready to ask, what great system of truth, as you judge, do the divine oracles teach? The inquiry is altogether appropriate, and we answer: undoubtedly that so admirably set forth in the recognized symbols of our beloved Church—the Catechisms and the Confession of Faith. We receive these symbols *ex animo*. By no infrequent or superficial study of them, in comparison with the Scriptures, we are thoroughly convinced that no more exact and complete expression of the mind of God, has ever been made by uninspired men. We receive them, therefore, not only in those points in which they are

at one with the common faith of evangelical christendom, but also in those where, unhappily, so many, otherwise orthodox, dissent from them. Their very peculiarities here seem to us precisely those of the Bible. In this sacred place, therefore, we shall feel bound to preach, not only the doctrines of the Trinity in unity, the Deity of the Son and Spirit, the native sinfulness of man since the fall, justification by faith in an atoning Saviour, and eternal judgment, in opposition to Socinianism and its affiliated errors, but also the representative character of Adam, and of Christ; imputation, therefore, both of sin and righteousness; sovereignty, also, and specialty in the purposes and acts of infinite grace; in distinction from Arminianism in all its forms and degrees. We think these truths are clearly revealed; that they are of deep interest and moment; that to reject or slur them mars and dishonors God's system, and, so far, impairs the means and power by which he would save lost men. Those so called improvements in modern theology, as compared with that of the Reformation, which discard these truths as belonging to the contracted ideas of a darker age, are, in our view, simply perversions of right reason and scriptural testimony; which show the foolishness and presumption of men, not their sagacity or their piety. As we love the truth, the Saviour, and the souls of men for which he died, we must avoid and resist these speculations and delusions, and cleave with our whole mind and heart to the oracles of God.

II. The Christian Minister is further required to preach in THE STRENGTH OF GOD. "If any man minister, let him do it as of the *ability which God giveth.*"

Besides the general application of the text already adverted to, we do not hesitate to admit, in this part of it, a reference to the specific duties of the Deaconship. It is plain, however, that with an intenser emphasis, it applies to the higher and more solemn function of ministering the word.

It is obvious, too, that the expression, "the ability which God giveth," denotes something more than the faithful exercise of those mental and moral powers which are natural to men. These are indeed to be used, and with the utmost skill and force, in preaching the gospel; but they are to be used with a persisting and holy reliance for success, on the graciously co-operating and supernatural power of God.

The dependence of the human mind on Him who made it, is direct, perfect, absolute; as much so as is that of passive and dead matter. The most capacious and sublime intellect, would sink in instant idiocy or nothingness, should God withdraw his influence. He gave to Newton, Milton, Edwards, their powers, as really as he gave to Gabriel and his fellow angels theirs. In either case the gift behoved to be conserved by Him who bestowed it. It is equally true of all men and all angels. The necessity is plain. Self-existence belongs only to God. Independence even, of a creature, is a term without meaning.

But besides this dependence of the mind on God, for its being, and in its ordinary operations, it is equally dependent for illumination, so as to discern spiritual things; for sanctification, so as to admire and love what is holy; for that supernal unction which alone can duly qualify the Christian Minister for his sacred work and office; and which,

when most vividly realized, will cause him to look up more earnestly and hopefully to God, for strength and efficiency.

And above even this, there is a necessity which inexorably compels us to Omnipotence, in the labor of the gospel. It results from the nature and greatness of that change to be wrought in the souls of men, before they can be fitted to go up from the jaws of hell to a holy and glorious heaven. What other change so radical, so entire, so really immense. Why, look at God's own representations as to human character, and the resulting state of men. "They are all gone out of the way; there is no fear of God before their eyes; there is none righteous, no, not one: the carnal mind is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, neither can be; by nature the children of wrath; condemned already; yea, dead in trespasses and sins." Hold your minds to this last averment of the Spirit. How sad. How terrific. How true. Dead! yes, dead in sin!

Of course unrenewed men have physical life. Their bodily organism and powers may be perfect. None, in this respect, may be more sensitive, vigorous, beautiful, than they.

They have also mental life. We can find among them some of the most gifted and brilliant intellects. Their understanding can unravel the intricate, and fathom the profound. Their reason can construct most strong and lucid chains of argument. Their imagination can range wide, soar high, and clothe with unearthly forms and beauty its own almost countless creations.

But they have no spiritual life—none. Of that noblest, that divine kind of existence, there is not in their souls the slightest pulsation. It is utterly extinct; as much so, as

is animal life in that dead body you have just now with weeping committed to the grave. Dead, testifies the Spirit, dead in trespasses and sins!

Now, the office of the Christian Minister contemplates the communication of spiritual life to these subjects of spiritual death. In such a work what can he do, except as a mere instrument? What can truth, argument, eloquence, entreaty do, except, also, as mere instruments? Doubtless, there is a most perfect adaptation of the means God employs in this matter, to the end he seeks, and to the nature of men whom he would save. But what of this, as touching the point we are now considering? What efficiency can there be in any or all means, or instruments, however adapted, apart from the intelligence and power that use and apply them? That sword of finest temper and keenest edge, what execution can it do, without a skillful and powerful arm to wield it and press it home? In the sphere of religion, what can the sword of the Spirit do, without the arm of the Lord?

Recur to the Scriptural representation just now cited, and let analogy instruct us.

Go to that grave where is buried a dead body. Bid it live. Speak in the name of God. Reason, exhort, promise, threaten, weep. Does it hear you? Does it obey your voice? Does it come up from sepulchral ceremonies and gloom into the consciousness and joys of a new life? Alas! Dust unto dust, is the inevitable process. You cannot make alive the dead body.

Go, then, to that other and sadder grave where is buried a dead soul. Repeat your attempt. Bid it live. Speak in the name of God. Reason, exhort, promise, threaten,

weep. Does it hear you? Does it obey you? Is there now light in the darkness? Is there now life, from the dead? No. The sepulchre^e continues silent and gloomy. The desolation still reigns. You cannot make alive the dead soul.

Let God instruct us. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "Ye are his workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus." "You hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O, my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves; I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live."

What then? Do we make void, or in anywise disparage the efforts and influence of men, through this power of God? By no means. No conclusion could be more illogical and unwarranted. This truth of our dependence on God, felt in the intensest degree, seems to us one of the grand elements of all successful preaching. Is God engaged with us? What an animating thought. How it imparts vigor to the weary, power to the feeble, hope to the desponding, courage to the fearful. May I, who in myself am nothing, lean on Him who is almighty? Will His strength be made perfect in my weakness? With exulting confidence, then, I will go forth to my great and otherwise hopeless labor. I have in this a blessed realization and solution of Paul's paradox—When I am weak, then am I strong;—weak in myself, weaker than an infant, but strong in God.

Nor, as we conceive, does this truth, diminish the necessity or value of talent and learning in the Minister of Christ.

As it is the law of God's government to effect moral and spiritual results by appropriate agencies, the completest fitness for his service is to be intently desired and attempted. No one needs more than the Christian Minister, the highest endowments, both of nature and grace. No one needs a more thorough mental discipline, more varied or available information, more skill to reason or more power to impress and sway. If commanding powers of intellect, the wealth of learning, or the fascinations of eloquence become the orator, or jurist, or statesman, conducting the comparatively small affairs of time, much more do they become him who stands before men to negotiate the claims of God, and prepare the soul for its majestic course along the expanse of immortality.

Let him, then, assiduously culture his mind, invigorate and enlarge it by habitual and manly use, and enrich it with the treasures of all appropriate learning. The habits so formed, and the acquisitions so gained, will be beyond price.

Let him, moreover, in this general labor, devote some special study to philosophy. In its proper conception and use, it will help him in his sacred work. By its aid he can better understand the mysterious nature and subtle yet mighty powers of the soul. It will give him skill to detect and expose the protean forms and disguises of error, in its ceaseless assaults on the evangelic faith; to discern more clearly the divine fitness and excellence which characterize the Scriptures; and, in its presentation to the mind, to invest the truth with such precision and transparency, as shall often startle men from the deep apathy of speculative unbelief. Let him even revere philosophy and honor her

decisions, while she moves in her legitimate sphere. When she passes that, and invades the domain of God, let him rebuke her pretensions and frown on her impiety.

Let him also duly regard, as an important auxiliary in his great work, the power of those means and influences, designated by the term moral suasion. It can often rivet the attention of men, thrill them with sympathy or fear, arouse their conscience, and temporarily curb their passions. According to his ability, let him wisely use it, in the exhibition of divine truth, and the enforcement of human duty. He is bound to attempt all those avenues to the hearts of men which God has made. He may depict the beauty of holiness, the goodness of God, the love and agony of Christ, the attractions of heaven, and so awaken, if he can, their admiration and gratitude. He may clothe the skies with blackness, roll the thunder, dart the lightening, set the rainbow, if he can, to draw the gaze of men, and then, through the parted clouds, show them God in his infinite majesty; God whom they have sinned against, and by whom they are condemned. All this may make a salutary impression. It may serve some good purpose as preparative to salvation. Let him, however, remember that the imagination and the sensibilities are not the heart; that the one may be wrought up to intensity, while the other hates the truth with an augmented bitterness; that in the specific and immense work of regenerating men, all human arts and power are impotent. They can do much beside, but they cannot do this. They may, peradventure, roll the stone from the door of the sepulchre; they may take off the grave clothes, but they cannot vivify the dead. The power that originates and communicates spiritual life, and spreads

abroad spiritual light, is resident only in God. O, then, if any man minister, let him do it, not as if the great result he seeks can be effected by might or by power; by learning or philosophy; by logic or eloquence; or even by the truth alone. Let him do it as of the *ability which God giveth!*

III. The Christian Minister is still further required to preach for the GLORY OF GOD. "That in all things, *God may be glorified* through Jesus Christ."

For this, God built the universe, created all intelligent existences, and sustains them in the being he gave.

For this, the co-equal Son of God came forth from the Father on his mission of redeeming love.

For this, the eternal Spirit of God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, visits this ruined world, to effectuate the purposes of the infinite Three, and prepare the redeemed for heaven.

For this, Gabriel, and the whole angelic host, veil their faces, spread their wings, present their adorations, and fill the celestial world with praise.

For this, man was made with all his various susceptibilities and active powers.

For this, even mute nature

" Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars and blossoms in the trees."

Yea, the universe itself, in its minuteness and its immensity, is as a resplendent mirror, to reflect from every point the attributes and all the glory of its infinite maker and sovereign God!

Selfishness is the contrast and antagonistic principle. It

is the ultimate source of discord, disorganization, desolation. It arrays every creature against every other creature; and all against God, their author, and their only bond of union and blessedness. The intelligent and moral universe is thus riven into as many different and hostile parts, with as many centers of primary affection, as there are individuals. The Bible denounces this. It reveals another and a nobler law. It sublimely says to every creature, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." It establishes, thus, a common and worthy center of supreme affection to all men and all angels, sweetly binding the heart of each one to the other; and of all, to Him who sitteth upon the throne. The glory of God, therefore, both essentially involves the highest good of the universe, and necessarily flows from it.

Now, in reference to this great end of thought, effort, being, the Minister of Christ occupies a position of peculiar responsibility, because one of peculiar advantage. There are respects in which he can do more than others to make manifest the glory of God. He is required, therefore, to do more. He must never lose sight of this ultimate and supreme end in his preaching. God is glorified when his truth is honored, his grace received, his government rejoiced in, his attributes adored. Every soul brought in contrition and faith to the cross, and which thence pursues the way of holiness to heaven, adds lustre to the crown of Christ, and beauty to the rainbow round about his throne. The exulting notes of the angels, when they witness the triumph of mercy, whether in the case of "one sinner that repenteth," or in connection with scenes of revival, when many press into God's kingdom, are notes of praise to the

ineffable Trinity. Every victory of truth, holiness, and Christ, over error, sin and Satan, brings glory to God.

How much, then, may the Christian Minister do, in this ennobling and holy work. And how ought this truth to give activity and power to his intellect, ardor and enthusiasm to his heart, argument and eloquence to his tongue. For this let him often bend the knee in secret. For this, so far as possible, let him regulate the intercourse of life. For this let him enter the sanctuary and the pulpit. Especially there, while humbly though firmly holding upon the divine strength, let him hide himself behind the divine glory. Let there be impressed on all his prayers, written on all his sermons, stamped in vivid characters on his whole manner, faculties, aims, life, this,—“that in all things God may be glorified, through Jesus Christ.” “Him first, Him midst, and Him without end!”

If we glance now, in closing, at the points thus gone over, with a view to some of the practical deductions they authorise, it is evident:

1. First, that the Minister of Christ comes to men with a *definite and divine message*. The Scriptures are “the oracles of God,” attested to be so by kinds and degrees of evidence, to resist and deny which is madness. The doctrines, therefore, we teach, are from his wisdom. The precepts we enjoin rest on his authority. The promises we rehearse flow from his love. The threatenings we denounce are robed with his sanctions. “The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; but he that hath the word of God, let him speak that word faithfully.” The truths we thus proclaim, no matter how controverted or despised, will

remain truths. The errors we thus condemn, though entrenched in sophistries, never so plausible and seducing, will remain errors, ruinous to men and hateful to God. The sins we thus rebuke, though patronized and defended by a world, will remain sins, to be exposed and punished in the great judgment. And then, in all the alternations of hope or fear, of joy or sorrow, of success or disappointment, we shall be as graciously accepted and rewarded by God, if faithful, as though through our instrumentality the race came bending in love and homage at his feet.

2. It is further evident, that every Minister of Christ has the *best possible ground of encouragement and success*.

It were indeed a labor, from which the mightiest angel might shrink, if, superadded to the responsibility of faithfully preaching "the oracles of God," it were his also to invest them with a renewing and transforming power; if by the force of his intellect, or the impressiveness or splendor of his eloquence, or by any of the arts of conviction or persuasion, within the reach of creatures, he must enthrone the truth as it is in Jesus, with an actual and abiding supremacy over the heart. Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed. By such power Satan is not cast out, nor the dead raised.

This, however, is not our work. The dispensation of the gospel is, by pre-eminence, the dispensation of the Spirit. When, in all fidelity to men and to God, we have delivered his message, our responsibility as to that ceases. Another and a divine energy intervenes between the proclamation of mercy and its acceptance by the lost. The Almighty Spirit comes, and, when he wills, breaks the heart of adamant, breathes the breath of life, fills the quickened soul

with gracious impulses and affections, and forms it in the transcendent image of God!

Can we ask for a higher power? Can we wish for a greater encouragement? Is not this enough to make the desponding joyful, and impotence itself mighty? "Who art thou, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the head-stone thereof with shoutings; crying, Grace, grace unto it!" Why? Because, with Zerubbabel is the Spirit of the Lord. Let us, then, in this sacred labor, but "speak as of the ability which God giveth;" let but the energies of Omnipotence attend our ministrations, and we will call upon the dead, upon these dead, and they will hear, they will obey, they will come up out of their graves, they will go forth in the view of men and angels, in the beauty and power of a new and an immortal life!

3. It is still further evident, that every Minister of Christ may be sustained and cheered in his work, by the anticipations of a most glorious futurity. God will be glorified. Whatever else is doubtful, this is sure. As one of God's faithful servants, he also will be glorified.

He will not indeed be without many and sacred pleasures this side of heaven. The purest happiness on earth flows from doing good, and becoming like the Saviour. The consciousness that, under God, one is the means of diminishing the sins and wo of men, augmenting their temporal welfare and enjoyment, and preparing them for a blessed immortality, what pleasure can surpass this? But this is felt by the faithful Minister. And while he is thus blessing men, he will himself be growing up into the

image of Christ, which is the very means and element of bliss.

Besides this general influence of his labors, he will also have some special seals of his ministry. God will give him, at least, here and there a soul as jewels for his crown. Recognizing him as their spiritual father or benefactor, there will be some who will love him with a sacred affection; who will minister to his necessities; who will sympathize with him in his trials; who will remember him in their prayers; who will listen with interest and profit to his instructions; and who, when God takes him to heaven, will cherish his memory, and go to his grave and weep.

But more than this; he labors in a cause not only sacred, but which shall triumph. There is no peradventure about it. Whatever may be the immediate results of his personal ministry on men, the day is rolling on when the universe shall witness the coronation and enthronement of Christ the crucified, as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Men and devils cannot prevent it. The glory of God, in the redeeming Son, shall be revealed. Heaven, earth and hell shall see it, and the arch of the universe ring with hal-lujahs!

In the surpassing glories of that day, the faithful Minister of Christ will specially share. Contemplate him, then. He has fought the good fight, he has kept the faith, he has finished his course, he has received his crown. Surrounded by those who were saved through his instrumentality, see him adoringly approach the sapphire throne. With a voice of heavenly melody hear him say, "Here, Lord, am I, and the souls thou gavest me." Issuing from the inaccessible

glory, are heard the gracious accents, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

Man of God! is this the end of thy course! Is this the reward of thy labor! Is this thine eternal blessedness and glory! O, then, go on! Undismayed by difficulties or dangers; undesponding in trials; grateful for mercies; and with thine eye and heart immovably fixed on heaven, go on to accomplish thy mission! In sacred fidelity, preach without ceasing, "*the oracles of God, as of the ability which God giveth, that in all things God may be glorified, through Jesus Christ.*"

4. It is evident, finally, that these solemn duties of the Minister of Christ, involve corresponding duties on the part of those to whom he is called to preach. The fearful responsibility existing here, is not restricted to the pastor or the pulpit. Ah, my brethren, you have an interest in this matter. If I must preach the word of God, on greatest peril, in case of unfaithfulness, surely you are equally bound to be present and hear it; to hear it as his word; and, by virtue of his authority, to render it a prompt and practical obedience. Otherwise, what is intended as the means of life, will become the occasion of an aggravated guilt and a more terrific condemnation. Beware, I beseech you, of this result of an unheeded gospel. God helping me, I will declare to you all his will. God helping me, I will live among you in all christian fidelity. In his great name I here devote to your service my time, faculties, attainments, heart. You have called me to do it. When I would have gone to the home of my childhood and the graves of my fathers, you said: No, remain with us. Be

our teacher, our pastor, our spiritual counsellor in this life; our guide to heaven. The providence of God so strangely concurred with your request, that, though it cost me a struggle not to be told, I durst not decline it. I am, therefore, with you to-day, before God, and thus solemnly give myself to your service in the gospel of his Son. It is an occasion of vast moment, as well to you as to me. We begin now a relation whose history will inevitably add to the glory or the gloom of our eternity. Let us alike earnestly seek to have it crowned and made sacred by the seal of God. I want your sympathy, prayers, love, and steady and cordial co-operation. I want you who are aged to give me your encouragement and blessing. I want you who are parents to repeat at your fire-sides, and exemplify in your lives, the truths I preach. I want you who are young, first of all, giving yourselves to the Saviour, to come and stand by my side, and in the freshness of your affections, and all the vigor of your expanding powers, to help on the great and holy cause of God here, and through the world. United in heart and effort to do his will, God will assuredly vouchsafe to us his gracious presence. He will dwell in our beautiful Sanctuary. He will fill it with attentive worshippers. It will become the scene of revivals; the birth place of many souls. His presence, too, will be in our happy homes and our grateful hearts. It will ennoble us in life. It will give us the victory in death. It will spread inconceivable blessedness and glory over our immortal being. Through his infinite mercy, may all this be realized. Amen.

THE EDIFICE OF

THE SEVENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

A representation of which prefaces the title page, is pleasantly located on the west side of Broadway, between Fourth and Fifth streets, Cincinnati.

It is 68 feet wide in front, by 115 in depth, exclusive of a Lecture room in the rear 40 by 68 feet.

The internal arrangement is peculiar, at least in this section of country. The Church and Lecture room being upon the same floor, no basement is necessary, whilst the apartments are rendered vastly more elegant, cheerful and convenient.

The style of architecture is "Gothic." The front, which is built of the finest freestone, beautifully dressed, is divided by the tower into three parts, each of which contains a spacious doorway, opening into its corresponding vestibule, and thence into the several aisles of the Church.

The tower is 145 feet high, divided, as is usual with Gothic Churches, into entrance, organ, clock, and belfry sections. It is finished with boldly projecting angular buttresses, which diminish in offsets as they ascend, and are terminated with highly enriched pinnacles.

The belfry windows are coupled, with slender heptagonal shafts running up between each, also furnished with carved summits. This section, with its long narrow windows, its richly ornamented cornice, deeply paneled battlements, and various pinnacles shooting their slender spires far above the roof, is probably not surpassed for richness and beauty by anything of the kind in the United States—certainly not in the West.

The interior of the Church is high and spacious. Fine large windows, filled with colored glass, abundantly light the apartment, which at night is illuminated by a superb chandelier of original design and chaste workmanship.

The ceiling is composed of intersecting arches which, springing

from pendants between the windows, spread themselves in a fan-like form towards the center of the room, where they gradually die away with a peculiarly light and pleasing effect. Foliated enrichments, corresponding with the style, are introduced, where the ribs intersect or meet, thus relieving the plainness of the ceiling, without marring its simplicity or offending the eye by an appearance of trifling ornament.

The pulpit, choir, gallery, and pews, are perfectly original, and exceedingly elaborate, both in mouldings and carved work. The gallery is one of the most costly and imagineate specimens of its kind anywhere to be seen; while the pulpit, with its fine rerados, is scarcely a whit inferior. The pews are also of a beautiful design, and unusually large.

The Lecture Room, immediately at the rear of the Church, is a plain, substantial building. The principal apartment is light, pleasant, and convenient. In the second story are rooms for the Pastor's study, Session, Trustees, Ladies' Missionary Society, Sexton's residence, &c.

Throughout the whole Church edifice, there prevails a spirit of elegance, simplicity and comfort, that will ever preserve its popularity as a place of worship.

The edifice was solemnly dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, on Sabbath, November 2d, A. D. 1851. The dedication sermon was preached at 11 o'clock, A. M., by Rev. Wm. C. Anderson, D. D., President of Miami University, Oxford, O., from the text—II. Chronicles VI, 41: "Now, therefore, arise, O LORD God, into thy resting place, thou, and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in thy goodness."

In the afternoon at 3 o'clock, the Lord's Supper was celebrated—many others from sister churches uniting with them in the ordinance.

At 7 o'clock in the evening, Rev. Dr. Lord preached a sermon from 1st Cor., 1st chap. and clause of 21st verse: "The world by wisdom knew not God."

The morning and evening services were attended by large audiences, which filled the house to its entire capacity.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 022 168 901 A