

THE AMERICAN
NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 4. Vol. XX.]

APRIL, 1846.

[WHOLE No. 232.]

SERMON CCCCXIX.

BY THE REV. GEORGE POTTS, D.D.
PASTOR OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN UNIVERSITY
PLACE, NEW YORK.

THE HOUR.*

“Father! the hour is come.”—JOHN, xvii. 1.

We cannot believe ourselves mistaken in maintaining that, although every religious service should be perfumed with the odour of Christ, the service which so distinctly and affectingly records his *death*, should with especial sacredness, be consecrated entirely to such thoughts as grow immediately out of that grand subject. Surely if at any time we are to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, this is the time. Remoter topics however important in their place, would divide attention and exhaust a portion of the energy of thought and emotion, which the great duty of the occasion, requires and deserves. Then let the first and the last thought of the soul upon this day be—the love wherewith He loved us, who gave himself for us—the more especially as the appointment upon which we are to attend, comes with the emphasis of a special injunction, “Do this *in remembrance of me.*”

In this spirit, we have now, as upon all similar occasions, selected words from the pages of sacred scripture, which directly summon us into the very midst of the wonders we commemorate. We wish, not so much to reason as to feel: not to present truth in controversy, but truth admitted, and so to present it, as to draw our souls out of the range of their ordinary associations; and from the eminence which our subject alone affords, to contemplate the most momentous realities which human history presents to our view. Such a height is the historical period of the passion of the Redeemer of men: and to reach it, let all our energies of thought, attentive thought, excited and consecrated by the Divine Spirit, be given to the deep significance which belongs to the words of our text “Father! the hour is come.”

* A Communion Sermon.

SERMON CCCCXX.

BY REV. ELISHA YALE, D. D.
KINGSBORO', NEW YORK.

CHARGES TO THE RICH.

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1. Tim. vi. 17, 19."

Them that are rich—that have abundance. Though we cannot define the term *riches* with any certainty, yet the term *abundance* will suffice for all practical purposes with such as candidly own the truth. To others we expect not to present a charge, even from God, with much hope of success.

Charge them that are rich. We say, as a judge of Israel once said to a king of Moab, "I have a message from God unto thee." And the command of God to us is, "whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." "To you, O men, do I call; and my voice is unto the sons of men." The Lord hath spoken—*Charge them that are rich.* The Lord does not say, "Let them alone, for there is no hope." But he says, *charge them*—evidently to do them good, and call them to the noble and god-like work of doing good. Had he determined absolutely to destroy them, he would send them no warning. But inasmuch as he says, *charge them*, we may believe it possible that they may obtain mercy. The fact also that a few rich men have obtained mercy encourages the hope, that a charge to the rich may not be in vain. And the words of the Saviour encourage us still farther, as he says, "That which is impossible with men, is possible with God." Hope, therefore, a little hope there is, of reaching them that are rich in this world. Hear, then, hear ye that are in prosperity, for God has not passed you by: it is possible that your souls may live—barely possible—so that good tidings may reach even to you, the most inaccessible of all human beings, of whom the God of truth once said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Despair not, however, for "with God all things are possible." He sends a message unto you.

But the charge must be delivered in the name of the Lord; it must be heard and regarded; and then your souls shall live, and your riches shall be a blessing to yourselves and to the world.

CHARGE THEM THAT ARE RICH IN THIS WORLD,

1. *That they be not high-minded.* Lofty thoughts do not become men, who have nothing but what they have received. Nor

the souls of others. Others are in danger and can be saved with great difficulty. What then will become of the rich? They can hardly be saved. The Lord Jesus pitied, while he warned them. The apostle, Paul, warned them, and urged Timothy to charge them to lay hold on eternal life. The apostle, James, cried out to them, saying, "Weep and howl!" O, my soul, "Envy not the rich," but as God bids, charge them not to trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

If you are unconverted, your wealth is "a wall to keep you out of heaven." It is a car, to roll you easily and speedily down to hell. Would you ever be converted, now receive the Lord Jesus gladly as did Zacheus. Then, like him, quietly give the half of your goods to be rich in good works, or some proportion equally acceptable to God. And, if you have gained any thing unjustly, be prompt in making restitution. Thus will the Lord say of you, as he did of him, "This day is salvation come to this house."

If you profess to be Christians, and yet are not possessed of the spirit enjoined in the text, we leave you with the words of the Apostle James, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone."

POINTING THE ARROWS.

The celestial armory is well supplied with weapons. They are not carnal but spiritual. They are of ethereal mould, and of divine workmanship.—When well directed, they pierce the heart and wound the conscience. They are the arrows of the Almighty and when they are made to strike fast in the soul, their wounds are deep, their poison drinketh up the spirits of men, and constrains them in the agony of their aching hearts to hasten to the Great Physician for balm to heal their wounds. Unlike all other arrows and wounds, they have a blessed design and wonderful efficacy.

There is a class of men—soldiers of the cross—who are specially appointed to this celestial archery, whose solemn business it is to go in the name of heaven's King to his armory, where are stores of

inexhaustible abundance laid up ready for use, and to select and draw out the sharpest, choicest arrows, and to use them with divinest skill. Some of these archers are expert marksmen. They are so chiefly in their choice of the arrows. They show an admirable acquaintance with the armory, and select with great care and labor those weapons which are best suited to do execution. They desire above all things to acquit themselves as soldiers of the cross, and gain the approbation of the Great Captain of salvation.

Some years ago there lived a very skilful archer. His name was Payson. He was mighty in handling spiritual weapons. He was greatly familiar with the celestial armory. You would think he had spent all his days in examining the etherial temper and divine workmanship of the weapons in that inexhaustible storehouse. He could select and draw out the arrows with wonderful skill. When he drew his bow, the arrows flew thick around, and there are many still alive who remember his skill, and how they were sorely wounded, and have been joyfully healed. But even he, with all his skill, often confessed his impotence. There seemed to be something wanting. He felt it, and mourned over it, with deep feeling, and with a heart gushing with sorrow. He seems at length to have discovered the true cause and left it on record. We read it the other day, and such is its almost immeasurable importance, that we copy it for the serious and prayerful consideration of the many whom it concerns. He said, "It will be found, I doubt not, in the coming world, that ministers had much less share in the success which attended their labors than is now supposed. It will be found, that if they drew the bow, the prayers of christians pointed and guided the arrow." If, then, the gospel fails of success in any church, if there are no revivals, no conversions, no inquiring sinners, no presence and power of the Spirit, no quickening influence, no effects from the weapons of truth which fly from the archer's quiver from Sabbath to Sabbath, let the Christians in that church lay it to heart, that it is because their prayers do not "point and guide the arrows." Here, perhaps, may be found the sad and guilty cause for the long and gloomy dearth of revivals which now afflicts the churches of our land.